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NUMBER

Robert's

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ADVICE • UPON • THE • SKIN • AND • COMPLEXION.



In this age of adulterations there are few things more difficult to obtain of a pure quality than Toilet Soap, and few which the public regard with less suspicion, notwithstanding the different effect upon the health and personal appearance which the constant use of a good or bad article must produce. The want of the requisite knowledge of the manufacture of Soap too frequently leads the consumer to an improper selection—perfume or colour alone usually outweighing other and more important considerations. It should be observed that, as a rule, highly coloured Soaps are dangerous; Green, Red and Blue particularly. All artificially coloured Soaps contain unnecessary, though sometimes harmless ingredients, and nearly all Toilet Soaps contain an excess of Soda. White Soaps—especially when very white, such as "Card," &c.—generally contain a much larger quantity of Soda than others, owing to the use of Cocoa Nut Oil (selected for its white appearance), which makes a bad and strongly alkaline Soap that is very injurious to the skin, besides leaving a roughness and disagreeable odour.

These remarks are endorsed by the following extract from the *Times*, (June 4th, 1861) on the subject of Toilet Soaps—

"DANGEROUS SOAPS.—At a recent sitting of the Academy of Medicine, Dr. Réveil read a paper on the necessity of preventing perfumers from selling Poisonous or Dangerous Soaps. To show the danger there is in allowing their unchecked sale, he said, 'I need but state that arsenic, the acid nitrate of mercury, tartar emetic, and potassa caustica, form part of their ingredients, whilst they are coloured green by the sesquioxide of chromium, or of a rose colour by the bisulphate of mercury (vermillion); some, which are cheaper, contain 30 per cent. of insoluble matter, such as lime or plaster, and others contain animal nitrogenous matter, which, having escaped the process of saponification, emits a bad smell when its solution is left exposed to the air, or not having been removed by washing, becomes rancid, and causes a chronic inflammation of the skin.'"

THE injury done to the skin and complexion by the use of these ill-prepared Soaps is seldom attributed to the real cause, so that, unfortunately, the mischief proceeds until too often the beauty of the complexion is ruined, and even the general health impaired.

PEARS' TRANSPARENT SOAP IS INVALUABLE

TO those whose skin is generally irritable or readily affected by the weather, on account of its purity and non-irritant character, all Redness, Roughness and Chapping are prevented, and a clear, healthy appearance and soft velvety feel secured to the Skin, which, thus properly performing its functions, is naturally accompanied by a delicate and beautiful complexion. Its agreeable and lasting perfume, beautiful appearance, and soothing and emollient properties commend it as the greatest luxury and most elegant adjunct to the Toilet.

WITH the fullest confidence the Proprietors of Pears' Transparent Soap recommend their specialty to those not already acquainted with it. They do not claim that it is the only pure Soap, but one of the very few offered to the public.

FOR Nursery use, Pears' Soap is of especial advantage, for it may be used with perfect safety to the most delicate infant. Children, it should be remarked, are among the greatest sufferers from the effects of bad Soaps; their tender skins being particularly sensitive to any irritating ingredient, whence the blotchy appearance many of them present. Babies are constantly subjected to the violent preparations of white Soap, the colour of which gives perhaps a delusive idea of Purity! Nurses cannot be too much cautioned in this respect.

PEARS' Transparent Soap is positively the most economical Toilet Soap one can use, on account of its remarkable durability; owing to the closeness of its texture and the absence of all moisture, it can be used down to the thinnest possible piece, lasting nearly three times as long as any other Soap.

PEARS' Soap, unlike other Toilet Soaps, improves by age instead of being required fresh; is uninfluenced by climate, and can be used in hard or soft water; which qualities, with its portability and durability, make it a special desideratum to Tourists and others travelling.

PEARS' Transparent Soap is unequalled for Shaving purposes. It produces instantaneously, with either hot or cold, hard or soft water, a profuse, creamy, delightfully fragrant lather, which owing to the purity of the Soap does not cause redness or irritation of the skin, but leaves a sense of comfort and cleanliness attainable by no other means.

IN the form of Pears' Shaving Stick, it is particularly recommended, as, being applied directly to the face, no Shaving Dish is required, rendering Shaving a more cleanly and agreeable process than results from the use of the various pastes and creams.

PEARS' SOAP IS ABSOLUTELY PURE.
PEARS' SOAP IS FREE FROM EXCESS OF ALKALI (Soda).
PEARS' SOAP CONTAINS NO COLOURING MATTER.

PEARS' SOAP IS DELIGHTFULLY PERFUMED.
PEARS' SOAP IS REMARKABLY DURABLE.
PEARS' SOAP has been in GOOD REPUTE nearly 100 Years.

ITS DEEP BROWN AMBER COLOUR IS NATURAL TO IT, AND ACQUIRED BY AGE ALONE.

PEARS' SOAP
FOR THE TOILET, NURSERY AND SHAVING.
PEARS' TRANSPARENT SOAP

PEARS' SOAP
PURE, FRAGRANT AND DURABLE.
PEARS' TRANSPARENT SOAP

A careful perusal of the following Reports of the most Eminent Analytical Chemists, together with the Testimonials of the élite of the Medical Authorities on the Skin, will convince the most sceptical of the immense Superiority of PEAR'S SOAP.

REPORTS OF EMINENT ANALYSTS.

From Dr. REDWOOD, Ph.D., F.C.S., F.L.C., &c.;

Professor of Chemistry and Pharmacy to the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain.

MESSRS. Pears have long been celebrated for their Transparent Soap (Transparent Soap was invented by them), and from frequent examinations and analyses of it during a period of thirty years, I can certify that it possesses the properties of an efficient yet mild detergent, without any of the objectionable properties of ordinary Soaps, which usually contain free fatty acid or caustic alkali, or alkaline salts, giving them a greasy arid or irritating character. It is quite free from Cocoa Nut Oil and artificial colouring matter, and may be relied upon for great purity, uniformity of composition, and agreeable perfume. It may be represented as a perfect Toilet Soap.

From CHARLES R. C. TICHBORNE, Esq., LL.D., F.L.C., F.C.S., &c.;

Lecturer on Chemistry at Carmichael College of Medicine, Dublin, and Chemist to the Apothecaries' Hall of Ireland.

IHAVE made three separate and independent analyses of Pears' Transparent Soap, the samples being procured by myself at ordinary Retail Shops, and from these examinations I am enabled to certify to its purity. It is made in the most perfect manner and is free from any causticity—to persons of delicate skin a question of vital importance. Being free from all adulteration with water its durability is really remarkable. I cannot speak too highly of it for its strikingly illustrates the perfection of Toilet Soaps. Within the last few years a great number of Transparent Soaps, imitations of Messrs. Pears' invention, have appeared in the market, of a most inferior and injurious character, consisting of Cocoa Nut Oil, Glycerine, and a large addition of water, and I have found in them over five per cent. of free caustic soda, and nearly one-third water. I need hardly say that such Soaps are necessarily most hurtful.

From Professor JOHN ATTFIELD, F.R.S., Professor of Practical Chemistry to the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain; Author of a Manual of General, Medical, and Pharmaceutical Chemistry.

IHAVE annually, for the past ten years, made an independent analysis of your Transparent Soap, and have not found it to vary in quality or in composition. It contains neither excess of alkali nor of moisture, and it is free from artificial colouring matter. A better, purer or more usefully durable Soap cannot be made.

From Professor CHARLES A. CAMERON, M.D., F.R.C.S.I., S.Sc. Camb. Univ.; Professor of Chemistry and Hygiene in the Royal College of Surgeons, Ireland; Medical Officer of Health and Analyst for Dublin.

IHAVE analysed Samples of Pears' Soap, purchased by myself in Dublin. I find it remarkably good—prepared from pure materials, combined in the proper proportions, and free from Cocoa Nut Oil and from artificial colouring. It may safely be used upon the skin of the tenderest infant.

From STEVENSON MACADAM, Esq., Ph.D., &c.; Lecturer on Chemistry, Surgeons' Hall, Edinburgh.

IHAVE made careful analyses of several tubs of Pears' Transparent Soap, which I obtained indiscriminately at different Shops in Edinburgh, and I can certify to its being a pure and genuine Soap, free from admixture with any foreign substances, and practically devoid of causticity. It combines detergent with emollient properties in a high degree, and it may therefore be used with great advantage for toilet and bath purposes, especially in the case of children and others whose skin is soft and delicate and liable to be affected by the impure and caustic nature of ordinary Soaps.

MEDICAL TESTIMONIALS.

From Professor ERASMUS WILSON, Professor of Dermatology, Royal College of Surgeons of England [in the "Journal of Cutaneous Medicine."]

"THE use of a good Soap is certainly calculated to preserve the Skin in health, to maintain its complexion and tone, and prevent its falling into wrinkles. PEAR'S is a name engraven on the memory of the 'oldest inhabitants'; and Pears' Transparent Soap is an article of the nicest and most careful manufacture, and the most refreshing and agreeable of balms for the skin."

Dr. TILBURY-FOX, late Physician to the Skin Department, University College Hospital, London.

"PEARS' Soap is the best Soap made."—*Vide* Tilbury-Fox on the "SKIN," p. 509.

Mr. JOHN L. MILTON, Senior Surgeon, St. John's Hospital for the Skin, London.

From the "Hygiene of the Skin."

"FROM time to time I have tried many different Soaps, and I have now, after Fifteen Years careful trial in many hundreds of cases, both in Hospital and Private Practice, no hesitation in giving my verdict to the effect that nothing has answered so well, or proved so beneficial to the skin, as Pears' Transparent Soap."

From "The Bath in Health and Disease," by the same Author.

"PEARS' Soap is unrivalled for purity, and is really the most economical of Soaps, as it contains scarcely any water, as Professor Attfield's analysis incontestably demonstrates."

Dr. BARR MEADOWS, Physician to the National Institution for the Skin, London.

"PEARS' Soap is, in my estimation, greatly superior to any other form of Soap with which I am acquainted, and my best testimony to the fact is—always using it myself."

Mr. JAMES STARTIN, late Physician to St. John's Hospital for the Skin, London.

"FOR many years I have had the pleasure in recommending and using Pears' Soap in preference to every other, as being perfectly free from those impurities so prejudicial to the Skin, found in most Soaps."

Mr. JAMES STARTIN, Surgeon and Lecturer at St. John's Hospital for the Skin, London, Successor to the late Mr. James Startin.

"AS to the Soap you should use: Having made innumerable experiments with all the best known Toilet Soaps, both of English and Continental Makers, my experience as regards Pears' Soap endorses that of the late Mr. James Startin, Professor Erasmus Wilson, Dr. Tilbury-Fox, and similar writers. I have invariably found it perfectly pure, and the most efficacious in health and disease, and hence I recommend it to patients in preference to all others."

H. S. PURDON, M.D., Physician to the Belfast Skin Hospital.

"THE best Soap I know is Pears' Transparent Soap, and I recommend it to patients and friends."

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Stick (In Neat Case.) or Round Cake (To Fit the Shaving Dish) Price 1/-.

SUFFICIENT FOR TWELVE MONTHS' AVERAGE CONSUMPTION.
Larger Sizes of each Shape, 1/6 and 2/6 each.

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IF any obstacle is thrown in the way of its purchase by dishonest Dealers, the Proprietors will supply it direct at the following prices, on receipt of P.O.O., but they prefer and recommend that the Public obtain the Soap through the Trade. This Notice is necessary, as vilely-injurious imitations are often substituted for extra profit, even by Dealers who would be thought "respectable" some of whom attract you into their shops or stores by marking PEAR'S SOAP, as a bait, at less than cost price, and then recommend you to take some rubbish on which they get a large profit. Consumers have simply to insist on having PEAR'S SOAP, remembering that any substitute is offered for the advantage of the Seller.

Retail.	Per Single doz.	Per Case of 12 doz. Case free, and Carriage paid in Gt. Britain.	Retail.	Per Single doz.	Per Case of 12 doz. Case free, and Carriage paid in Gt. Britain.
6d. (unscented)	5/-	£2 12/6	1/6	15/-	£7 10/-
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PROF^R ERASMUS WILSON,

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Hands and Complexion.*

Adelina Patti.



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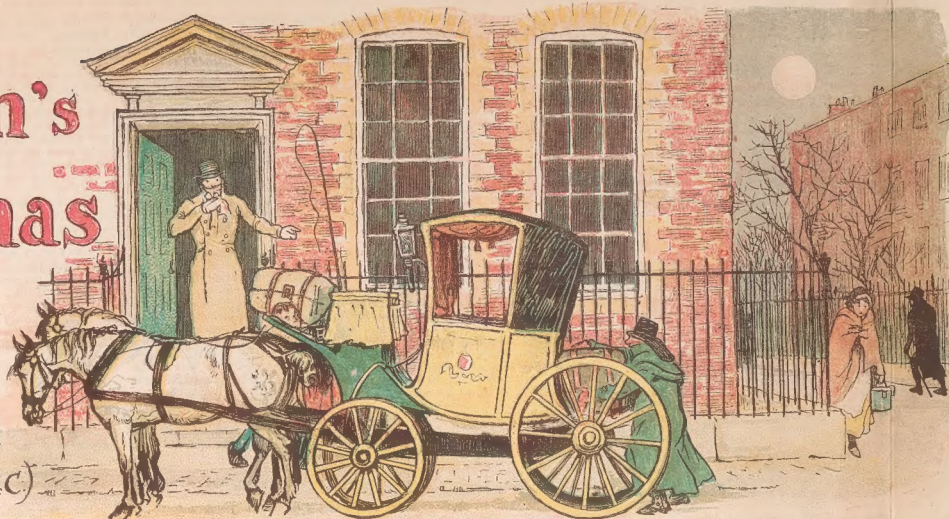
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COTTONS.

Mr. Carlyon's Christmas

as noted in
his Diary
Pictured by
his Grandson (R.C.)



21ST DEC.—Invitation from Squire Wood to spend Christmas at Marley Hall. Sent for hackney coach and started at once.



Found a seat on the Red Chester coach.

23RD DEC.—Delayed by deep snow on roads in Shropshire.

Had to push behind.

At Dodington Side-bar met by old family servant with gig.

Little way up lane stopped by two highwaymen.



"Mars Being in the Eighth House."

A TALE OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

BY CLAUD TEMPLAR.

"... Concerning any man or woman, if thou wouldst know what kind of death they shall die, see in the Eighth House—if Mars or Ceres dominates there, they shall die by fire, steel, or of a fever."

GERARDUS CREMENSIS:—"De Geminitis Astronomica."

I.

AROUND the barber's shop, over against the Domkirche, tongues are clattering busily, it being spring time and a fine morning in Nuremberg. "He must be a magician," cries a lantern-jawed young scrivener; "my father hath often said as much about him." "Selling your presence, Otto Mauler," retorts the barber, "and you being but new arrivals in this our good town, the present company ought to know more concerning the matter than either you or my father."

"Ah!"—chorus of portly citizens—"Well said, Barber Jürgen! We know. We are not a pack of fools. We know."

"He hath a familiar spirit, I tell you—a grey cat—the veritable spawn of Satan."

"Why, man!" laughs out Master Claus, butcher; "thy own lank chops savour more of brimstone than doth poor pussy, who, indeed, gives so many hours to the coveting of certain meats on my counter that she must have but scant time to whisper secrets to her master."

"Thou defend him? Dost he not live upon parched peas and water?"

"What matter? Thou canst go any day to his door, and eat thy share and his too for the asking."

"Well, my masters, deny me then that he is an alchemist, that he doth make mountains of gold by unholly arts, wherewith to play the miser!"

"Saints above! Otto Mauler; meseems that for unholy coin the fifty thousand gulden of his free gift to our worshipful Town Council have not brought over-much disaster on their late improvements in the Hexten and the Jurlen Quarter."

"Good!" applauds the chorus; "no miser's act was that."

"And, again, do you mind you, gossips, how, when during the war last year they brought him bars of lead and copper to turn into gold, he laughed softly, and bade them rather take them to the smelters for bombs, as gold they never would or could become by any art of his?"

"Ah, freely!"—chorus—"He is no magician."

"Do not be too sure, honourable sirs," breaks in a little decrepit old man. "Hath he not cured, with unknown and devilish potions, dozens wretches of whom the blessed Æsculapius himself would have despaired?"

"What, friend leech! Wouldst not kill thy patients, but burn him who can save them from thee?"

"He! He! worthy churgeon!"—chorus—"Tis a fine day, think you?"

"These be follies," resumes the scrivener; "I will stake my life Doctor Cornelius hath sold himself unto the Prince of Darkness (from whom all the holy saints protect us); mark my words."

"Then beshrew me if he is not stealing a march upon his master!" cries the barber, whisking away the cloth from about his last patient's neck. "See, yonder he comes from the Cathedral, leaning on saintly Father Caspar's arm. Sold himself to the Devil, didst say, Otto Mauler?"

Two figures are slowly threading their way higher amidst the knots of gay dresses and the busy market stalls. One is a stately priest; the other, in sober grey and high-crowned hat, is aged, and bent with much poring over books. His flowing hair, peaked beard, and mustache are silvery white, and contrast strangely with the dull waxen hue of his face that, but for the fire of those keen, benevolent eyes, might be the pallor of Death. Every now and then he acknowledges the salutation of some of the crowd with a dignified gesture or a genial word; every now and then he stops to enjoy the pleasant warmth of the sunshine, to admire the wares of some buxom country wench, to pat the golden heads of children who gaze in awe as he passes.

"Charity, great Doctor," whines a sturdy mendicant, huddled up against the framework of the plashing fountain; "charity for the 'eye of God!'"

"Friend—with reproving hand—if thou lackest bread my steward shall give it thee; if thou dost not—seek wages rather than alms."

The white perisais.

"Silence there, thou noisy vagabond!" cries the priest at last; "Dost want to renew thy acquaintance with the stocks?"

"Mark, Father Caspar, how the fellow scowls!—passing on—"

"Tis the way of the world; throw it a golden—Blessed Sage! Do but whisper a word of advice—Accursed Sorcerer!"

"Tis a rough age, in sooth, and an untractable."

"Tis an ignorant age, and a prejudiced. Thou knowest I am somewhat of a physician; I would fain apply to others the knowledge that, benefitting the few, hath credited me with supernatural powers, but the Nurembergers distrust me. There is not enough of witchcraft about these my cures to dazzle and attract their ignorance; there is too much to conquer their prejudice. So they go to the lancet, as of old, and are bled like pigs, for the megrim."

"Doubtless, ignorance is an evil,"—sententiously remarks the priest;—"Yet the Church hath elected, and rightly methinks, to withhold knowledge from the vulgar."

"Mother Church is wise in her generation," returns the old man, maliciously; "but science hath nothing to fear from investigation."

"Then quickly, as though to give his companion no time for comment on his somewhat heretical speech. "See those good people at Barber Jürgen's door. They are courteous enough, but their courtesy smacks of suspicion. For in their minds I am neither medicine legitimate nor Almighty Gramary."

"He of the pole bows low, notwithstanding, well in front of his customers."

"Friend Barber—stopping suddenly—"I have spoken of thy son to the worshipful Burgo-master. The decorating of the new hall will be entrusted to him."

The delighted shopman pours forth his thanks, and a murmur of approbation runs through the sleek circle around him—a propitious moment, and one of which the astute Otto Mauler, with a regard to his own interest beyond his years, does not hesitate to avail himself.

"I would humbly crave for myself, estimable sir," he says, coming forward, "the powerful influence you have just exerted in favour of another. I am by profession a notary. A word to the Rathsherren from one whose requests—"Pence, sed quibus contradiendi non potest," as Tacitus hath it—are of such weight, would give me—"

"That which, young man," breaks in the Doctor testily, "thou art scarce likely to gain by loitering about the market-place. Stick to thy desk, and ask thy labour to recommend thee."

Scrivener Otto shrinks crestfallen into the background, and snails.

As, amid a general salute, the priest and his aged companion are moving away, the silvery-blast of a trumpet arrests their steps, and, a minute after, a couple of horsemen gallop upon the rough pavement, scattering the many-coloured throng of stragglers in all directions, and halt at the hospitable doors of the chief inn of Nuremberg.

One leads to go hand with a clatter of sword and cuirass, and strides jingling up the steps, while the other sits under the hot sun in all his bravery of scarlet and steel, holding his comrade's smoking steed, and composedly scanning the upturned faces of the crowd his arrival has collected.

Presently the first turns, accompanied by the landlord, Peter Leckermann, and stands in the doorway impressing certain final directions on his mind.

"His Excellency will be here"—voice raised pompously—"in less than a quarter-hour."

Then remounts, and the two, with much twirling of moustache and ogling of maidens, betake themselves to patrolling the market-place in state from the Gasthof to the Daimling Gasse (which, as every one knows, takes you straight to the Frankfort Gate).

The first floor in its entirety, my masters—"unctuously from the host, in answer to many eager questions, with a comprehensive wave of his fat hand—"for his Highness time Hakim Xalostros, Physician Extraordinary to the Soldan of Arabia Felix, who is about to shed the light of his wisdom upon our poor town, and will arrive within a few minutes."

A crowd gathers a crowd; and by this time the townfolk have flocked up in such numbers that Doctor Cornelius and his friend are completely hemmed in, and must perform aware the advent of the magnificent stranger to escape from the rosy-cheeked peasant girls, and the sturdy piers which intercept their retreat.

A pause of high-pitched chatter.

Then the cavaliers are seen to stop, and the trumpet call rings again through the air.

As each expectant face turns towards the sound, a travelling carriage, followed by a wagon heavily laden with baggage, debouches from the Daimling Gasse and jolts up at a lumbering trot to stop with a jerk just in front of Peter Leckermann's lowest bow.

The baggage deposits two men, and turns into the yard; the men, a swarthy Arab and a small corpulent Frenchman, hurry forward to assist the landlord in lowering the carriage steps, the stiffness of which gives the spectators opportunity of a satisfactory stare at the arrivals.

Outside, a pair of footmen, well armed. Inside, on the front seat, a pretty boy with a shock of yellow hair, an impudent face, and a splendid costume of blue satin; opposite him, the great stranger.

He is wrapped, notwithstanding the genial weather, in a long black velvet robe, furred up to the gold-broidered feet that hides any hair he may have. He is bronzed, close shaven, benignant.

Perhaps his deep, fleshy eyelids might veil his opinion of Nuremberg, and the thin back which almost shows his flat massive chin might possibly not prepossess that town in his favour were it not for the peculiar fascination of his smile—a beautiful smile in truth, and a beautiful set of teeth to smile with. Strangely enough, however, when it is over, and his features in absolute rest, he is not pleasant to look upon. It may be that the length of his nose interested him the proper fashioning of his mouth. Certainly it would seem that Mother Nature had given up the task in disgust, and contented herself, in its stead, with the incision of a pale, straight line across his face. The effect is queer—well nigh sinister. And so he keeps the engaging smile in his mind, but his eyes, as his wrinkled path attacks; but when it fades—he seems to be dropping a mask.

The door swings open on its leather hinges, and Front Seat springs out lightly to offer his shoulder to his master who, leaning one hand upon it, descends with measured gait to the ground.

"Friend Mauler! About the Cathedral, leaning on saintly Father Caspar's arm. Sold himself to the Devil, didst say, Otto Mauler?"

Which shrill homage and a few sparse cheers from the crowd Xalostros acknowledges with studied courtesy, and is making for the house, when his little Frenchman, darting forward to do the usher, manages somehow to trip himself up, and falls heavily against the stone threshold.

"Ah, Dieu! Mon bras!"—in a yell of pain.

The landlord has him up again in a trice, but the step is already reddened, his sleeve is torn open, his arm is deluged with blood from what appears to be a deep, jagged wound.

The bystanders do not stop to inquire how he comes to be so injured, but throng round him with horrified faces, and do their best, as is the usual wont in such cases, to keep as much air from him as they can.

"Stand back, good folk!" cries the Hakim authoritatively, taking him from Peter Leckermann's embrace; "a clear space, my dear friend! Mine host, some pure water. And you, Stello, hand me the medicine-case you wot of."

The circle widens promptly in a tremor of excitement as his page flies back into the carriage, and returns with a quaint oaken casket. Then the white imperious hand unlocks it, hovers a moment along a rank of squat phials, finally selects one.

"In Nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti!" A sign of the Cross, and three drops of purple unguent on the shrinking wound.

"Now, hold out his arm, and let the water flow over it."

A small catarrh pours down to the pavement. When it ceases—O marvel!—not a sign of the injury remains, except, perhaps, a slight discoloration.

The astonished spectators take a minute to recover their breath, and then burst into such a ringing cheer as the walls of the ivy-cold old Gasthof can seldom have heard.

With a wave of the hand that partakes both of benediction and dismissal Xalostros turns his back on the people, and slowly mounts the steps. Facing and behind him stand Doctor Cornelius and the priest, leaning against a buttress.

What a wicked old man that must be! For he smites on the pavement with his stick, and growls something to his companion that no Soldan's physician could be expected to hear unmoved.

"Abominable!" exclaims the scrivener, eyes cowering. In sooth "I was not badly managed, even for a recreant trick."

The Hakim stops, as if for breath, but the evil straight line supplants the complacent curve of his smile, and the heavy lids disappear and unmask a pair of steel-black eyes full on the contemptuous gaze of the speaker.

Doctor Cornelius accepts the challenge, and returns fire for fire. Soon his defiant contempt kindles into wrath. The wrath becomes hatred. It fights for the mastery. It wavers—is distressed—gives place to confusion—turns finally to terror, but the baleful light glitters on, and he stands beaten, speechless, paralysed. Then the lids fall again over those eyes, the velvet-cloth figure resumes its sweeping course, and he is free to struggle out of the crowd with his friend, and him away home as best he can. Meanwhile, Peter Leckermann is receiving his guest.

"Allow me to welcome you, Excellency, to Nuremberg."—A becatom of bows, each more propitiatory than the last—"This way, Excellency, this way."

"And my poor cook, Master Host? Where will you bestow him?"

"The wife has him in hand"—bow—"he will be well cared for, Highness. This way, so please you, to your signally-honoured apartment."

"Hold," breaks in Xalostros; "I have business to despatch of pressing importance. An *Annulli*, my friend—a clerk skilled in the law. Canst find me one?"

Before the bald-pated landlord can call up from the misty depths of his mind one of the many names that grace the roll of the local jurisprudence, a lanky shadow eclipses his sun, and humbles itself, to his personal inconvenience.

"I am a notary, your Transparency. I am called Otto Mauler, and am completely at your illustrious disposal."

The Hakim looks him over, shrugs his shoulders, and signs him to follow.

"So you would fain be of service to me," says the great man, sinking into a capacious arm-chair as Peter shuts the curtained door upon them; "Leave us, Stello, and go get thee something tasty to restore thy strength."

"And when will your Excellency be pleased to do the same?"—lenuently the page.

"Thoughtful ever for his master's wants"—stroking the golden curls—Presently, my child, presently."

"Ah, good Otto"—beaming on him—"a little kindness goes a long way! Sit down, friend; you were saying—"

"That my humble skill is, such as it is, at the Herr Physician's command."

Xalostros inspects the speaker exhaustively.

"And yet"—smoothing his chin—"the man's appearance doth not speak of an over-extensive list of clients."

"True, Highness—in some confusion—"nevertheless (you will pardon me if I speak too openly)"

"It is a laudable quality always to speak the truth—especially to me."

"Nevertheless," Mauler continues modestly, "though people have not as yet become acquainted with my professional merits, I have made a point of becoming acquainted with theirs, both professional and otherwise."

"In other words"—with a quickly-suppressed flash of interest—"you have taken the trouble of acquiring, without their consent, the knowledge which every notary hath, with their consent, of his fellow-citizens' affairs."

"His Highness expresses my meaning to perfection. I flatter myself there are few Nurembergers of position about whom I could not tell him a little tale."

"For instance," returns the Hakim lazily, "an old man, white-headed and waxen-faced, taking the air with a portly priest?"

"Oh, the keen eyes of a truly great character! *Faciunt enim solus exortior super modis de honoris*. Nor am I at fault in this chance-chosen test of my powers. He is an acrimonious old Doctor Excellence, Cornelius Brandt by name, and by profession an alchemist and a sorcerer."

"You mistake the poor man?"

"I hate him"—bitterly—"afraid, the old hypocrite! And yet, he is in good odour with the townspeople."

Xalostros keeps silence awhile, and thinks deeply.

"Bah! my friend," he says at last, with a homely laugh; "It doth but prove that you are wrong, and that, after all, he is no magician. If he were, they would hate him you do, and fear him as a man of your prowess doth not. I have been hated,—rising, and speaking impressively—"I have been feared, but it is because I possess secrets the power of which exalts me above mankind, and denies me their love. I see my own immediate attendants would die for me; but they love me not whose future I foretell, whose life lies open before me as an open book."

Otto Mauler stands transfixed before the mysterious stranger who towers above him, and seems to search his pettinging soul to its inmost depths.

"I have come to this town"—imperially—"to give the world a last and signal opportunity of benefiting from the hidden lore of the East before I return to Arabia. I have but just arrived, but I call for a notary to find me a more suitable resting-place. The walls of an inn are scarcely fitting receptacles of the arcana of my ritual. I must have a house. Hardly have I said the words when a notary presents himself. You are that notary. You were fated to come at my call. You were fated to serve me; Me, the Master of the Elixir of Life and the Lord of the Cabala!"

The thin scrivener is so frightened that he only takes the time to repeat a thought, which rises in his mind of the claims of golden against Fate in the matter of his self-introduction, is blasphemous, before he falls on both knees and swears eternal allegiance.

Doctor Xalostros graciously is pleased to accept his fealty.

He is discreet and believing—particularly discreet, good Otto."

Half an hour after, the newly-admitted notary issues from the Gasthof, his pockets a good deal heavier than on his entrance, and takes himself off to the nearest eating-shop, where he indulges in a hearty debauch of roast beef and black-pudding to settle his disturbed nervous system, prior to an expedition in search of a residence for the Incarnation of Oriental Wisdom.

"That fellow may be useful to me," thinks Xalostros, looking with much self-gratulation at the addresses of two letters he has just indited. "Yes, the most influential of the Rathsherren—somewhat of an Epicurean, I think he said—and the pious Canon, who happens to be the friend of my first enemy hereabouts, will be a very efficient pair of supporters for a poor old charlatan, I fancy. Here, Stello, gaily—"these, with all despatch, for the Venerable Father Caspar, and the High-Well-Born Town-Councillor Kroll."

Then leaning back in his chair and cackling a little:

"Not so bad a beginning, indeed, dear Hakim!"

II.

UNCONTESTABLY, basing our argument on the

History of the Creation, Man is born to be the superior of Woman; Woman, again, on the authority of the subsequent episode of the Apple, is as uncontestedly born to lead Man by the Nose.

It were more reasonable, perhaps, to cut the Gordian knot of this much-versed question by accepting with a good grace as its solution the Equality, or *Status Quo*, in which it must as inevitably result as the famous problem of a contact between an irresistible force and an immovable body. But, as it seldom happens that the irresistible force does meet the immovable body, for the most part the one or other side gets the upper hand. Hence slave-wives and henpecked husbands.

All of which predatory disquisition leads up to the fact that the Watchword and Cornerstone of Councillor Kroll's philosophy is the following axiom: "Man is the Lord of Woman," and that pretty little Brunhilde, the Lady Town Councillors, has stuck to her sheet anchor, "Woman leads Man by the Nose," ever since she proved the truth of that maxim with her own baby fist upon the person who respected father some twenty-five years ago.

During full fifteen days, Rudolph Kroll has obstinately resisted all his wife's attempts at getting out of him an account of his interview with the splendid Unknown. He objects, firstly, because certain moneys, given him by Xalostros for charitable purposes, are still in his pocket, on the principle that "Charity begins at home," and he has reason to believe that Kroll will have to be satisfied with a share of the spoil to take the same view of that principle; secondly, because he fears that his report will inflame her mind with

the desire of seeing for herself, in which case he knows that much of the said spoils will return to the Hakim, he having special temptations in store for her.

For both of which good and sufficient reasons he has stood out, successfully enough, against a varied course of persuasion.

To-night, however, is chilly. He has just come in, and is encoined between the comfortable arms of his own special chair in the light of a roaring wood fire. The soft folds of his dressing-gown envelop his fat legs, his pipe is carrying calm to his soul, and a steaming glass of fragrance is at his elbow. It is, perhaps, unfair to take advantage of so ungarded a moment, but she has gilded on to his hair, and is promptly.

"Thou hast ever thine own way," says Frau Machiavelli, "thou dear Dölchen. These long daysthus thou hast been making up thy mind to tell thy poor Brunhilde how cleverly thou didst sift the stranger's purpose. Thou sayest to thyself: 'I wish her to know. It pleases me she should admire my tact.' And thou art going to tell me to-night, not being like other men, who are secret and unlovely—like that Ludwig von Epstein, for instance, the taciturn knight, who would not tell me if I prayed him on my knees"—Ludwig is her most favoured admirer, and would die to make sport for her, but no matter. "Thou sayest to thyself, 'I will please my wife better than twenty Ludwigs,' eh?"

They say the constant dropping of water will wear away a stone; and this stone is old, slightly decayed, and frightfully jealous.

Seeing the necessity, then, of pleasing his wife more than this disagreeable lover of her own, he has decided to do so. Yes, and rewards himself with a kiss. And then dribbles out his tale, between puffs from his pipe and sips from his glass, till pipe, glass, and tale come to a simultaneous conclusion.

How he went up the stairs all in a flutter of excitement—nothing but excitement, for in his work, how pleased the Doctor was to hear him; what an admirable man he was, what a man of the world; how the Doctor was smoking a curious roll of tobacco leaf, which he called a *seguro*, and was enjoyed by simply drawing a straw from its vitals, and placing the unlighted end between the lips; how he smoked! How innocent he tasted of a rare cordial from the Doctor's trunk; how very strong they both were, and how his prejudice against necromancy was shaken and finally overcome by the Doctor's convincing arguments—solely by the arguments, on his word. How the Doctor came to the point, and remarked that troublous times were in the air, and that a Professor of the Occult Sciences and of High Chemistry had of powerful protection against the mob! What great men the Rathsherrn were, and how powerful their protection! What a clear-sighted man in particular was Town Councillor Kroll, and how weighty his influence in the Town Council! How, on the 10th, the Doctor proceeded—"Mind you, worthy sir, I do not ask you to exert yourself in favour of a mere quack or deceiver—I am really what I pretend to be. I would not insult your philosophical mind by offering you the testimony of the Church, though, its true, there lies letters of commendation from His Holiness Pope Innocent the Tenth, but I would crave the favour of your attention to this!" how he perused with his own eyes a certificate of the President of the Guild of Goldsmiths at Genoa in unflinching praise of the Doctor; how, not further to weary his heart-beloved Brunhilde, he agreed to do his best to further the Doctor's interests, acted solely by disinterested admiration of his character—solely, on his word.

"But that chamois leather bag, my Dölchen," puts in Frau Kroll, after a pause, insinuatingly; "that one which is marked with the foreign name, and thou hast not yet put into the strong room? Did not the foreign name begin with an X, *mein Schatz*?"

"Ah, truly"—with a red face—"I forgot—that is, I had reserved that to tell to-morrow; the Hakim did certainly place money in my hands, to be expended as I thought fit, in short."

"Not on that, I take it?" quickly.

"No—not directly so—thou seest, it is for the benefit of the poor that my position should be kept up—and so forth—therefore—"

"Holy Mary!"—catching his drift—"surely not to the depriving them of their duty."

"Chut! my heart—thou didst not apprehend me." Then, with a sigh: "I thought that, perhaps, to encourage the trade of those same poor, a dress for two of murrey velvet, or tafetas, or what not, would approve itself to thee, and fulfil the good Doctor's intention."

"Ah, if it be to encourage trade, Dölchen, it were, indeed, a charitable action to expend some couple of hundred gulden thus."

And so the matter is settled.

The greater part of the morning Brunhilde occupies in deciding upon the colour which will best suit her benevolence, and thinking about the Hakim.

The next day she gives an impetus to the commerce of Nuremberg by seriously weakening the mental faculties of sundry oblique hatching before she fixes towards sunset upon the original sky blue velvet which at noon passed first under her critical fingers.

The day after that she considers the fashion of the confectioning thereof with the sempstress—should the sleeves be slashed with white sammet or puffed with grey tulle?

Then for several consecutive days she feeds her curiosity concerning the Hakim from the storehouse of her imagination, having nothing much more pressing to do.

At last the robe is finished; and she proceeds in state to the residence of her particular friend, the Burgomaster's wife, where she is fortunate enough to find a select circle of beauty assembled, which admires to her face, and raises eyebrows behind her back, as correctly as the most ardent votary of the Mode could desire or expect.

"Yes, it is not much behind the times, I am pleased to fancy"—looking triumphantly at her hostess—"As for the stuff, Venice itself could not—why Marie, what a charming colour thou hast to-day!"

"So?"—smirking.

"And thou, Charlotte, what hast thou done with thy freckles?"

Charlotte giggles, and tries to look unconcerned.

"And thou, Trüdechen, how large are thy eyes since last week, and how languishing! And oh, what pretty gloves, Lisa! And scented too!"

She looks in astonishment from one to the other.

"What doth all this mean?"

A general burst of merriment.

"Ask Doctor Xalostros," laughs the circle.

"Ask him to favour thee with a flask of his Cyprian unguent."

"A cake of his fine Khol."

"An ounce or two of his Dust of Roses—"

"Such a fairspoken man was never seen, for sure—"

"Such sparkling jewels—"

"Such sweet-smelling perfumes—"

"And he will tell thee the true Secret of Eternal Beauty, by which the Turkish Damocles do constrain their lords' love until old age."

"Nay, he hath even power to read the future!"

"He is never mistaken—"

"And you can look into the mirror for yourself."

Brunhilde listens to this flow of panegyric with some vexation; she does not like the idea of being forestalled with the great stranger.

"I am sure it is sinful," she says, trying to throw cold water on her friends' enthusiasm, "to look into the future, or have any dealings with such a man."

"Thou art wrong for once, Brünchen, my precious—" conclusively the hostess—"Father Caspar told me at confession but two days ago that it was even praiseworthy to assist Xalostros in his scientific experiments (for he will only accept contributions—not payment), as His Holiness the late Pope very specially recommends him to the patronage of the Faithful."

"Ah! what do you say to that?"—unanimously.

To Brunhilde, however, the title of the Hakim as does Father Caspar, this seems conclusive. Had she been rather more in the confidence of that incomprehensible man she might have informed the circle that a certain Dame Olympia Maidaichea, the said Pope's sister, being for the nonce not over-well supplied with coin of the realm, had once paid for the beautifying of the complexion as best she could.

"Why—that I am ready to see for myself, if any one of you will keep me company!"

Accordingly, before long, one fine evening finds Rudolph safely disposed of in the company of a kindred spirit, and Frau Kroll slipping out arm in arm with her Marie, on her way to the necromancer's abode.

It stands a little back from the street in the shade of the grim Town Hall, and is approached by a blind alley that effectually secludes it from the observation of all but those whom their business or their curiosity leads thither.

One of the magnificent curbs conduces to fling open the door in answer to Brunhilde's quavering knock, and shows her into an antechamber, where she occupies a few minutes in admiring the tapestry, and wishing audibly through the heavily-scented air that she had never left home on so questionable an errand.

But a gleam of azure satin irradiates the room, and Stello trips forward with a brass-bound book, and a *nichanale* little bow.

"His Excellency is waiting to receive thee after seven of the clock"—melodiously. "Besides, we make it a rule to require a week's notice of a visit of any importance—presenting the volume. 'If the fair ladies will inscribe their names and the hour most convenient to them, I can promise them an interview with his Excellency this day week.'"

Brunhilde objects decidedly to coming in broad daylight.

"I might possibly induce the Hakim to confer with you even as late as this; let me consider"—a duet slides most unaccountably into his hand—"Sure we could not deny one half as pretty; I will take the blame on myself; come then, if you must, at this hour, and you shall see him."

The door shuts upon them, Stello pockets the duet, laughs, and makes for the back of the house, where, in a luxuriously furnished room, Xalostros sits, washing down the fragrant fumes of his *seguro* with a fat bottle of right *Lazergere Claret*.

"Two more patiens, *Patron*!"—throwing the book on the table—"and murderous handsome of their kind. Item, one stately dark woman; item, one fair witch. Gentle Saint Venus! What a couple!"

Filling for himself—Good health to thee, most prosperous of excellencies!—a smack of the lips, he looks good even for the patients, remind me that I have something of an assignment to look to."

"Thou jackanapes!" grins the Doctor. "After the burghers' wives as of usual? But have a care, Stello. No imprudences—mind. One of thy escapades might ruin the whole venture, *Per Dio*!"

"Trust me, my ancient. I'll keep my wits about me"—pirouette—"And that Mauler, hast need of him again to-night?"

"Yes, child; send him in."

Xalostros fills his pipe and takes up the open book.

"And what may your mortal names be, my divinities? Hum—"

"Marie Pahlsdorf; methinks I have already prescribed here—lack of colour, was it not, *gnädige Frau*? Now for the other—ah! friend Kroll, is that thy wife, or thy daughter? In either case it seems probable that the stars were ably propitious to the reappearance of certain broad pieces that went thy way some three weeks past."

A creak of the door, and Otto Mauler stands before him. He is well dressed, almost richly, but his clothes are disarranged, and his wisp of hair is in disorder. The smoke makes him sneeze.

"Ah! Come in, good Otto, come in. Try one of my Indian weeds—"

Xalostros knows the scrivener's aversion to tobacco, but he invariably presses it upon him. What truly amiable man does not relish his little joke?

"Under favour, no," answers Mauler huskily; "but I am most consumedly thirsty, and so not above cracking a stoup of wine with you, my Prince."

"Drink away, man! Tush!"—removing the more precious liquid—"fill not thyself with that wash. See, have at this *Aqua Fida*; 'tis palatable and potent. I warrant thee. So! now, where is thy report, the offspring of thy observation? Where is my faithful Otto's report?"

The scrivener interrupts himself in the middle of the first draught to point from the couch on which he gracefully reclines to a closely-written paper on the floor; Xalostros picks it up and becomes absorbed in its contents, betraying now and then by a grin of anticipation the interest he has therein; the scrivener finishes his draught, and allows his eye to wander vacantly over the room till it rests upon the book. "There it stops."

"By the pigs of Saint Anthony!" he cries, jumping up. "There have been two names added since that I reported on the signatures." "Precisely. Dost know them?"

"Know them, quotha! Why, I did make it my business for a whole month to find out what lay betwixt Kroll's wife and a certain conceited spark (he kicked me once, I remember well enow) called Ludwig von Epstein."

The Doctor listens attentively, and makes a note.

"Lord! ha! mercy on me! After all, thou'st but a fool to me, for all thy sorcery! Do I not know the very place they met? The love passages between them? The presents he hath made her? The shop whereat he purchased them?"

"What manner of man is he?" inquires Xalostros, ignoring the scrivener's insolence.

"His hair is as red as his coat. His monstachous flourish as the green bay tree, and there is no taller man in Brüll's Army business; but, notwith, he is a conceited spark. A spark conceited as thou art, erudite, my King! He is an ass! Fill again, my benefactor!"

A turn of the Hakim's strong arm hoists him on to his legs in a moment.

"Now go, my friend!"

"Now go?" repeats Mauler, with drunken dignity. "When Hans had sucked the fruit dry he threw away the rind, I know, Xalostros. But I am no rind to be thrown away. I do not supply thee with supernatural knowledge for such recompense as this. Every man, woman, or child that looks into the mirror we wot of payeth the noble Hakim an hundred gulden. And I who provide pictures for that mirror, I am treated thus?"

He sways to and fro under the force of his emotion.

"I want justice, Xalostros! I desire my right, or—"

"Or, what?" puts in his master, phlegmatically.

"—Or I might, perhaps, make a round sum, for myself, Xalostros, by explaining to the Town Council the system of the said mirror."

A swift flash from the Doctor's eye, and an evil curl in his smile would seem to indicate a certain amount of danger in store for the speaker if he happened really to mean what he says, but it passes unnoticed, and it is with a truly paternal laugh that he deals Otto a

slap on the shoulder, and produces half-a-dozen gold pieces from his capacious pocket.

"A murmur on thy capricious humour! Why, friend, thou layest tongue to big words as glibly as though thou wert not the best of bon companions and the most amiable of tipplers! Here, take these for thy present necessities, and when thou wastest more, the old man will give them thee."

Otto bursts promptly into bitter tears, and makes one or two unsuccessful attempts at falling into the arms of his master, but finally suffers himself to be led to the door, and then handed over to the charge of Cuiras No. 1.

A dangerous knave, in sooth!" says the Hakim confidentially to a fresh *seguro*. And it is well into the small hours of the night before he seeks his couch.

Merit, however modest, cannot remain long hidden.

The next week bears testimony strong indeed to the truth of that saying. The unobtrusive old house under the Town Wall is invaded from morn till even by an eager crush of visitors. Gold flows into the Doctor's coffers in an uninterrupted stream.

Mysterious bottles leave the Doctor's laboratory as fast as they can be filled. Half the town is already intimately acquainted with its future, and is elated or downcast as the case may be. A score of well-to-do tradesmen are considering the propriety of giving up business as unbecoming their impending greatness. Twice a score of damsels of marriageable age have felt bound to send their humble sweethearts to the right about in anticipation of the arrival of certain princely or monied cavaliers.

Yes, incredible though it may seem, Xalostros has done nothing to blazon forth the pre-eminence of his talents. It may be that his entry into Nuremberg produced some trifling sensation, but would you have the Court Physician to the Soldan of Arabia Felix travel like an apostle? Really, he has done nothing to attract these crowds.

Indeed, he has been careful to entreat every one of his fair patients to maintain the strictest secrecy concerning their visit. A sacrifice of self, perhaps. He is used to sacrifice himself. It is his habit.

In due course the hour returns which the Town Councillor's wife assigns for her expedition to the blind alley, and with it returns the Town Councillor's wife.

In fear and trembling she is admitted to the Hakim's presence. In fear and trembling she contributes largely to the furtherance of his scientific researches, selects certain miraculous unguents and rare perfumes for her toilet, hears and forgets the veritable Secret of Eternal Beauty.

But she wants more: she longs to look into the misty years before her.

In consideration of another and heavier contribution, Xalostros suavely consents to gratify her laudable desire, and tinkles a silver bell.

"Zeid," he says to a glittering costume that appears at the door; "conduct this fair dame to the Hall of the Crystals."

The swarthy attendant leads Brunhilde through a maze of rooms and corridors, and at last, feebly illuminated that she can only see the polished floor before her. At last they stop, a curtain is drawn aside, and she is in a long narrow chamber, hung with black cloth.

Xalostros is already at work; clad in snowy linen, his head draped with a veil of the same material, a dazzling *lavan* of gold inscribed with strange characters on his forehead, he is signing the air with a straight guardless sword, and muttering uncouth litanies in a weird and droning chant.

"Thou seest yon mirror?"—turning to her after a pause of silent prayer. "Go thou up to it, my daughter, and look in therat."

She obeys. Her own face, rather pale, but otherwise her own, looks back on her.

"Now stand within this circle of power, and stray not from it at thy peril."

Advancing to a small tripod, he casts a powder upon the brazier it supports, and an odorous cloud rises to the ancient oak rafters above.

"Thou Creature of Glass!"—in ringing tones—"I adjure thee by the Seven Names, Aye, Tetragrammaton, by the name of the Lord Vachut rushing upon Abrah, Abrah coming upon Abrah, by the name of Aye Saraye, Aye Saraye, and by the conjunction strong and binding wherewith I am further able to exorcise thee to my pleasure, that thou reveal unto this Child of Earth here present the Future that awaits thee!"

As a dulcet strain of music breaks softly on her ear, Brunhilde sees the cloud of perfume dissolve, and an indistinct shadow pass over the surface of the glass.

It grows clearer. It takes shape.

"My Ludwig!" she murmurs enraptured; "it must be meant for thee."

The figure fades, and gives place to another—an old man, grasping a money-bag with jealous eagerness.

She turns a little paler, but that figure fades too. In its stead appears an old coffin lying on the floor, and a woman, fair and small. That solitary figure again, bending over her. Inside the coffin.

"Oh, no, no!" she shrieks. "Let me go! I never thought of seeing this. I cannot bear it. Let me go!"

And Xalostros, always so gentle and considerate, lets her go. And Rudolph Kroll, who is not so gentle, is surprised at the favour of his reception when he arrives home rather late that night, having, truth to tell, expected a very different one.

"Decidedly, Man is born to be the Lord of Woman!"—contentedly to himself as he ties on his nightcap.

III.

BUT the Rathsherrn, "hearing that his Excellency doth presently purpose to quit their town, and considering that during the six months last past he hath collected great sums therein for the carrying on of certain his experiments, do, by this their trusty messenger, instantly pray his Excellency to remain another six months at the least, that their town may profit by the purveying of the costly necessities of his art, which also hath contributed the purchase money thereto destined."

On the eve of his departure, too—most vexatious. Especially as he has more than one weighty reason to recommend a change of air; of which the principal are these three:

A. Nuremberg has only a certain number of inhabitants who are curious about the future. Hence no more than a certain number of fortunes can be told. And these fortunes have been told.

B. Though the desire of the fair sex for expensive attentances of the toilet seems certainly to be unlimited, the purities of their male relatives do not possess that quality.

C. Of late, a good many of his predictions have been due, and have been dishonoured. (Notably in the case of Nibel Schlummer, the young goldsmith, for whom the stars foretold long life and a large family, he having cracked his skull but a month ago the night before his wedding.) And this has not increased the popular faith in him, and his work.

So he had decided to resume his journey to Arabia Felix by the direct route, which lies, as we see by the maps, through the Netherlands. Moreover, there, people are as rich and not so narrow minded as in these antiquated German towns.

But here is this polite epistle from the Town Council, which



Overthrew the highwaymen, captured them, and dragged them before a neighbouring justice of the peace.



Arrived at Marley Hall late. Hearty welcome from Squire. Noticed that one of the guests, who seems a sort of country buck, took an instant aversion to me. Overheard him say that he hates town fops.



23TH DEC.—Heard a ghost Found it to be old Mr. Portsdown ogling the family portraits



27TH, 28TH, AND 29TH DEC.—Snowed up. Innocent indoor recreations, music, flirtations, &c. Diana Wood is a fine girl



2ND JAN.—Snow nearly gone. Squire Mallow (the country buck) saw a chance of shining, and sent for his hounds to-day. Found a fox in the laurels. I took the lead (to Mallow's disgust) and gave it to Diana. Had to admonish Mallow about riding dangerously close behind me over fences. Pleasant ride home with Diana



imports nothing more nor less than the intention of its worthy members to recoup themselves for their temporary indiscretion. And divers suspicious circumstances have, it is to be feared, set the populace against him. Visions of indignant dupes, confiscated goods, nay, even of a big fire in the market-place, rise before his mind. This is very painful. What is to be done?

His exodus, if he would not lose all the profit of his labours, is out of the question. If he remains he must recover his control over the citizens, or lose that profit in another way. In this he cannot help himself. Some other must come to his aid, some other influence must restore him.

That Cornelius, how has he managed? The people look upon him with awe and a certain mistrust, it is true, but that is the usual fate of men of genius in these times, and nevertheless they like him—positively like him, it is a known fact. How has he managed? What a pleasant thing it would be, by the way, to get him to tell one the method!

If Doctor Xalostros could but worm himself into the friendship of Doctor Cornelius Brandt; if he could but be seen about with him; if he could but catch the reflection of his good name and popularity, all would be well, and he could seize his own opportunity to slip away with his little belongings unnoticed.

And then, perhaps, the old man might let out the secret of his wealth. Who knows?

Now if there is one thing more than another for which this deservingly renowned philosopher, Xalostros, Hakim to the Sultan of Arabia Felix, is remarkable, it is, perhaps, not so much the invariable correctness of the conclusion to which he arrives after mature consideration of the premises before him, as the promptitude with which he puts that conclusion into action. An ordinary mortal might possibly object that second thoughts are best. But Xalostros has a way of thinking out his subject far beyond the second thought, even unto the twenty-second, if need be. The man who could alter his mind, after making it up as Xalostros is in the habit of making it up, were a weak man. And the Hakim is not a weak man.

So he takes up the pen that he has been gnawing all this time, and writes.

"The student Xalostros greets the learned Doctor Cornelius, and craves of him the favour of some few words at his pleasure. Hath the lion taught to fear from the jackal? Or doth ever Sol was jealous of Luna's borrowed splendour?"

This effusion he reads over, folds, seals, and secures with silk. Then he tinkles a bell. Enter, yawning, Stello.

"These, child,"—pompously handing him the letter—"with all haste for the hands of Cornelius Brandt, Doctor of Physics."

"But what if he refuse to see me," Stello hesitates best.

"He will see thee,"—decisively—"thou pretty imp of Satan. And, mark me, before the week is out he will see me also."

Stello bursts out laughing. "To deliver thee to the Rathsherrn for an impostor, my master. Why, master, do they not say that thy name is in his hearing, and a red rag behind his eyes?"

"Mark me," repeats Xalostros, interrupting, "and do thou my bidding. That letter he will read in as many pieces as his face hath wrinkles. This night he will not sleep for thinking of it. To-morrow he will order his household to forbid me the door. The next day he will send for me. Vanish!"

Stello departs with an incredulous grin.

"We once had a passage of arms together," thinks the Hakim; "and I had the better of him. And the old man would dearly love his revenge. Methinks he will send for me."

Whereupon he returns to the study of the occult sciences, and a dragon of Rheinish. And after the lapse of an hour or so the door opens, and Stello swaggers in again half defiantly.

"Well?"—inquiringly.

"Why, as to the epistle, it was blazing bright merrily when last I saw it; and as to my reception, I was shown the outside of the house so soon after I entered it, that, I faith, I have but little to boast of."

"Good, very good," chuckles the Hakim. "Certainly I am a prophet! Of that there can be no doubt. Poor child!"—pulling his ear not unkindly—"so they handed thee out? Let but my schemes prosper, there shall not be much more hustling for thee and me."

And that day passes away without other event. Also the next day. Also the day after that. Also several more days. Until Xalostros begins to think that for once he has been deceived in his estimate of the human character.

But one fine morning the prediction comes true. Whether it be that Dr. Cornelius is after all eager for an opportunity to confute the arguments, and expose the ignorance, of a quack rival, or that he is unable to overcome his curiosity as to what manner of man this serving-rival may prove on a closer acquaintance, certain it is that a serving-rival in his lively brings on the morning aforesaid a letter for the Hakim, which on inspection is found to contain the single word "Come."

In great pomp, therefore, with his two men-at-arms on in front to clear the way, the Arab Zeid bearing a large caken case before him, and the portly little Gaul behind to keep off the over-curious, Xalostros sallies forth, robed in costly furs, and leaning on the arm of his slim young page.

There are many people about, and the unaccustomed sight of the great stranger in the streets gives rise to much speculation. To his satisfaction he meets Father Caspar, and claims his countenance in a grave salute. That cathedral dignitary has his doubts concerning him, but nevertheless bows, not so much to him, as in him to the letters of commendation of Pope Innocent X., of which he has no doubt, having seen them. But it produces the desired effect on the spectators, they are not being versed in such subtle distinctions.

"See then!" says one gossip to another; "thou wouldst not believe when I told thee that good Father Caspar spoke well of his Excellency—and now, I say thee?"

"They seem companionable enough," answers the other. "He cannot be all they say of him, truly, if he be well liked of Father Caspar."

"And what a princely presence he hath!"

"Ah, and what splendour in his living!"

Other citizens flock when they hear such speeches, and mutter that the Hakim may well be magnificent after deluding so many out of their wits and moneys; but their disapproval does not hinder them from hanging on the skirts of the procession until it stops at the doors of Doctor Cornelius, whereto, being much taken by surprise, they wait about to see what will come of so unusual an occurrence.

Xalostros leaves his other retainers outside, and, accompanied only by Stello, enters the heavy portals of his enemy's house. They ascend the oak staircase behind an old servant, who looks upon them with undisguised suspicion, and shows them with scant courtesy into an antechamber, whence he goes to announce their arrival to his master.

"Follow me in with the case, Stello," whispers the Hakim; "and when I give the sign, leave us, and await me here."

"Right, master,"—casting a critical eye over the walls which are hung with pictures of price—"the sentinel will be found at his post. Mark, 'excellence, how Science doth make an handmaid of Art. Old Money Bags, meseems, can tell a daub from a masterpiece, for all his!"

"Hush, boy!" frowns Xalostros. A curtain is raised, and the old servant motions them in through a low door into his master's sanctum. Then drops the curtain, and leaves them in the presence of Cornelius himself.

The room is lofty and lined almost up to the ceiling with books,

Books again on the large tables, on the high-back of chairs, on the carpet of thick pile. Books everywhere, old and faded, new and resplendent, but always showing signs of frequent use. At the further end of the apartment stands a small furnace, which is laden with curious retorts and uncouth machinery, and diffuses a sickly heat through the air. A large dumbwaiter emits faint bubblings in throes of some mysterious experiment, and the pungent exhalations of chemicals mingle with the musty odour of fish, flesh, and fowl, whose effigies grin in fictitious life from the walls, or whose skins lie scattered here and there about the floor.

All of which looks so strange enough seen in the subdued light of the great stained oriel. So also do the two visitors moving slowly into the room. So also does the central figure, white-headed Cornelius, draped in his Doctor's robes of scarlet and black, and hovering about his alembic as though he deemed himself still alone.

Presently the bubbling ceases, he pours off the liquid into a brazen cooler, and removes the costly apparatus to a place of safety. Then he moves, not without dignity, towards his rival, and signs him to a chair.

"Be seated, sir,"—carelessly placing himself back to the window.

"You find me at work. That, to a man of your nature, will need no excuse."

Xalostros bows gravely, and sits him down, cackling inwardly over his host's little manoeuvre. It was awful of Cornelius to bring the enemy's forces into the open, remaining the while under cover; but the Hakim, having been in the field once or twice before, had expected nothing less of so astute an adversary, and had planned his campaign accordingly. Besides, it is only the impostor who cannot bear the light, just as it is only the truthful man who can look you straight in the eyes when he says "Yes, yes," or "No, no," say (which, by the way, is done to perfection by the really clever liar, public opinion notwithstanding, but then that is the result of much practice, and of course one could not suspect the Hakim of anything of that sort). So it is with a placid and confident smile that he leans back in his chair, and gives up his composed features to the scrutiny of Doctor Brandt.

"*Ars longa, vita brevis!*," he murmurs. "On the contrary, worshipping sir, it is I who have to crave your pardon for this intrusion upon your scientific researches. And, indeed, were it not in reference to those very studies that I would confer some short while with you, I should hardly have been in the risk of a rebuke from one whom I am not even worthy to offend."

The old man pricks up his ears. "Good," he thinks; "now I shall catch thee tripping, friend charlatan." And aloud, with a scowl of distrust he is wholly unable to repress, "Proceed, worthy sir. I listen."

Xalostros rises. "Bring hither the case, Stello." The boy obeys, and, on a sign from his master, bows low, and leaves the room.

Placing the oaken mystery on a table, the Hakim produces a key from the capacious depths of his fur, and turns the lock.

"Doctor Cornelius," he says, with his hand still on the hasp, "I will weary you with no long preface. Nevertheless, it is needful that I should tell you thus much—that I have journeyed far and long, that in my journeyings I have chanced upon many strange discoveries, of which the curious animal preserved in the least—And that I verily believe the example you shall now see of that species to be the first, and only one, in Christendom."

Then, throwing back the lid—"Of your courtesy, tell me, I pray you, what name they have for this creature in the schools."

The case is lined with tin, and exhales a strong odour of camphor. Within, upon two tin-covered supports, rests the stuffed specimen, which, sure enough, is of so strange a shape as at once to arrest the attention of the old naturalist. For its body, nearly two feet in length, is covered with soft fur, and presents something of the appearance of the skin of a cat, with the addition of a flat mandible instead of teeth and jaws, and its heavily-webbed feet might belong to some duck or waterfowl of inordinate size. Avid of novelties, he soon perceives that here is a novelty indeed. But, being deeply prejudiced against Xalostros, and that, perhaps, not altogether without cause, he checks his awakening interest with the thought that this, no doubt, is another of the impostures of that clever but designing man.

"A cunningly-devised forgery," he thinks; "but, by the help of the saints, good charlatan, I will confound thee."

With this preposterous intention he begins over the puzzling problem of foot-footed fur, and submits it to a searching investigation. Peering at it with his bright old eyes, touching it with his delicate old fingers, he can make nothing of it after the lapse of some long minutes but that it appears to be a sort of hybrid between bird, beast, and cat, and, as he checks his leave, he takes up the specimen from its resting-place, and examines every joint separately, bringing the force of his magnifier especially to bear upon those parts where the fraudulent adaptation of distinctive characteristics would be most likely to betray the imposture.

Then he falls to pulling at his pointed white beard, and ponders deeply. Then catches up his glass, and examines again. Then relapses once more into deep thought.

And ever and anon he pulls down some huge zoological folio, and turns over page after page till he drops it with a growl, no wiser than before.

At last he breaks silence. "A discovery!" he murmurs. "By'r Lady, a discovery!"

As is the case with most men who feel strongly, the reaction in his mind in favour of the Hakim is violent as was his former prejudice against him. Rising to his feet, he says, "I crave your pardon, Xalostros," he says, with more of respect in his intonation; "I will be frank with you. I had deemed the thing a piece of crafty trickery. But mine eyes have convinced me. I judged you basely."

Blessed be the suspicious—theatrical from the Hakim—"that have won me such words from such a man!"

"Tush!" says the other in somewhat faint rebuke; "it is but your due. Yet it is not altogether unnatural that I viewed this strange creature with suspicion. For it is but three years since I travelled many a score of miles for a sign of some such another prodigy as this. The Ape-Fish they called it; and men said it was indeed the original of the Mermaid of legend lore, and the Nereid of the classics. So I saw it, and, though they would not suffer me to touch the thing, I established, and that conclusively, the imposture thereof. Whereupon I retired in my way disconsolate."

Xalostros grins broadly. "A vulgar trick, I faith! If I mistake not, I myself did once cross the path of that same Ape-Fish and its master, Basilio, the arch quack of Verona."

Doctor Cornelius frowns. The word of suspicion which the last words have succeeded in inspiring gathers again at the Hakim's words. He had forgotten the man's evil reputation in the excitement of his undoubtedly genuine discovery. He remembers it now.

Quis tulit Gracchos de cunctis generantibus!

"Ah, Master Quack," he thinks; "dost reprove quackery in others?" And then, with a searching look at his guest, he says, "Yet they do say, honourable sir, that you have amassed no small

fortune in this our good town by means that are not over far removed from the vulgar tricks of Don Basilio."

Xalostros is in nowise disconcerted by the home thrust with which his antagonist renews the fight. One might almost think he had provoked it, for he smiles covertly behind his hand, and his veiled eyes dart one flash of amusement which somewhat belies the deep long-drawn sigh that accompanies his next utterance.

"One must live," he murmurs; "not parrying the lunge, but stepping back to draw his man on."

"True," repeats the other, mollified. "But, with such talents as are necessary to success in evil, one may earn a very honest living."

Another sigh of humble confession. "I know not enough, alas! of medicine proper and the physics to secure a competency thereby."

Allured by this second retreat, Doctor Cornelius waxes hot, and puts in again a smart lunge—"Hah!" he growls, "a man bent thereupon, by application and economy, were a perfect physician in a couple of years."

"But," interposes Xalostros, repeating his tactics, "that I have tried; and of those whom I would learn bid the vendor of nostrums and quackery fortune-teller finish his studies elsewhere. They will none of me."

This time Cornelius loses patience, and, seeing an opening, would give his adversary the *coup de grâce*—"Saints in heaven!" he cries triumphantly. "Why, the man argues in a circle! A quack because he hath no learning, and unlearned because he is a quack. By the shirt of St. Gadale, friend, thou hast even less of logic than of medicine."

His enemy has confessed his ignorance. He has, moreover, confuted him out of his own mouth. Another word, and he will show him that with a pitying smile.

But it is the Hakim's turn now.

"The merit of my discovery," he returns, delicately reminding the old man that in their first bout he was worsted, "were but a poor defence against a charge which in seeming is so well founded. I may not answer to make it. At the same time I would submit that it doth in some degree testify to aptitude for, if not to skill in, the natural sciences."

The old eyes fall again lovingly on the specimen in its case, and their indignant fire fades a little as they look.

He continues Xalostros, changing his manner, and speaking with raised head and in clear incisive tones, "an admission of the occult arts will methinks hesitate before he brands as an ignoramus one who has learnt at the feet of such a teacher as Rabbi Ben Alheim all that there is of potency in the combinations of the Cabala, and who has fathomed—"

"Thou Ben Adhem's pupil!" interrupts Cornelius in astonishment; "thou a Cabalist!"

"Give me," cries Xalostros, "a table of commutations, right or averse, that I may unravel it—a plan of the ten Sephiroth, that I may decipher it. I unite these writings in *Lingua Angelorum*, or 'Passing the River,' that I may decipher it. Shall I construct for thee the Almadel of Solomon? Shall I frame thee a Pentacle? Wouldst thou watch me work out an evolution of the ineffable Tetragrammaton, or shall it be a scheme of nativity erected according to the true genealogy of Agrippa?"

"Hold," interposes the other, somewhat overwhelmed with this flood of words; "how comes it then that, with such excellent knowledge, thou art not high in the first rank of astrology, courted and revered!"

"Tush, worthy sir!"—resuming his quiet demeanour. "When my great-grandfather, Ben Adhem, went the way of all flesh, the other professors of my art, jealous of his fame, refused to accept me as their disciple, or to tolerate me as their rival. My reputation in the hidden sciences was already of sufficient eminence to gain me the dispraise of the Faculties of Medicine of Europe. Whereunto could I have recourse? With my patronage I might have become a second Nostradamus—I had no introductions. With a few years at the Universities I might have emulated Galen himself—they would not receive me. So I turned to good account a few secrets I had picked up in the course of my studies, and have earned my bread ever since with passable success."

Cornelius Brandt is, first, a physician, then an alchemist. The pursuit of the philosopher's stone has absorbed many hours of his long life. His hair has grown white in the practice of the healing art. But, together with these two almost all-engrossing occupations, he has studied and practised astrology and the cognate mysteries of geomancy and ceremonial magic—with but little result, however, for his skill therein, such as it is, is derived from books; and the books on those subjects are hard to be understood.

And more light, and he were on the high road to the mastery of knowledge, which, he believes, would give its possessor power, ay, and such power! Here, if what Xalostros says be true, is that light. Here is the man who can explain the dark passages, and direct the mystical experiments whereon so much depends. And that he should have taken to a means of gaining his livelihood even so ignominious as the delusion of the vulgar, obviously means more, under the circumstances, of a misfortune than a fault. But the knowledge he boasts remains to be proved.

Cornelius is not one to do things by halves. Either he is to believe in the Hakim, or not. Wherefore he rises, and, after some consideration, fetches two large volumes from their different shelves.

The first is a Paracelsus. Turning to a passage which, so obscure is its diction, has apparently no meaning whatever, he lays it before his companion.

Xalostros wavers a moment; and then, with a sudden flash of recollection, explains it fluently and perspicuously, with a copious extract from Peter de Abano in support of his opinion.

Cornelius immediately refers to the passage cited. The quotation is word for word. Much impressed, he ponders awhile, and, returning to the attack, produces a chapter in Agrippa's *Philosophi Occulti*, the keynote of which is lost in cypher. The Hakim's eye has hardly caught sight of the page before his lips frame the word that is wanting.

"A precious man," mutters Cornelius. "A very precious man. I must let him go. I must secure—Stay! a good thought! Ah, if he could interpret that, 'were, indeed, a crowning proof.' And, moving towards a great *ecritoire* he says aloud: "You tell me that you have travelled much. Perchance you may have mastered the language wherein is couched this writing. See"

He points to a parchment, inscribed with a few lines of quaint character—"this is an horoscope drawn some seventy years ago by an Eastern Dervish of no little repute in the casting of nativities."

Xalostros looks at it long and earnestly. So long, and so earnestly that the old alchemist begins to deem him at fault.

"Perhaps he will pretend to understand the writing," he thinks, "tusting in my ignorance thereof. Let us watch his words. Let us note what he says."

And the words come at last. "It is a dialect of the Persian, and familiar to me. The signs of technical meaning are such as were used of the Chaldean astrologers."

"Go on," encourages Cornelius, still on the watch. "Go on, good Hakim."

"As you have observed, it is an horoscope; and one of no inconsiderable construction. First, the operator hath noted the hour of birth, and such like. Next, he hath erected a plan of the heavens, duly divided into the twelve houses thereof. Lastly, he hath deduced therefrom these four consequences."

"Go on," repeats Cornelius; "go on, best of Hakims."

"Number One"—licking them off on his white slim fingers—"that the general complexion of the scheme being more favourable than malignant, the subject's life will for the most part glide away peacefully as do the deep broad waters of the River of Wisdom. A life of studious leisure, worthy, sir,—to leave the Persian idiom."

"Good," puts in the Doctor, "and Number Two?"

"That the flow of life will need careful tending if it be not to fade in the summer's height, or in the first days of winter. Let the subject look to himself in his thirty-sixth year, and again thirty-six years after."

"Strange!" under his voice from Cornelius—"At thirty-six I sickened of the plague, and well-nigh unto death. And now in two years I shall—"

"Number Three," resumes Xalostros; "that the subject shall wax rich; yet all his wealth shall be contained in an oyster-shell. Once more, I suppose, a Persian metaphor."

"Let each help on the other," mutters Cornelius, the interruption unnoticed. And once more, "Holy Mary, a marvel of prediction! Wealth in an oyster-shell!"

"The old Doctor rises in great excitement. 'Wealth in an oyster-shell! Now know I for a certainty,' he cries, exultingly, 'that thou art learned in tongues, and no deceiver. Thy hand, Xalostros! I wronged thee. Join thy learning to mine. Let each supply what the other lacketh. Let each—'

"Number Four," continues the Hakim, in even tones; "that the subject shall die of a warrior's steel, but never a warrior's death." "Thus agreed to," the half-donned citizens, who, day by day lounge away the best hours of the morning in gossip and the barber's shop, slowly and sapiently shake their half-donned heads—an expression of opinion which may be interpreted with equal probability into approval or dissent, and is therefore much affected in circles of any weight.

"I say it is a foul shame," resumes the scrivener between the scrapes of Jürgen's razor. "Eighteen months ago, when the noble King declared himself unto pestiferous old magicians, did not His Excellency (to compensate me the loss, for I was high in his confidence) obtain for me the post of Deputy-Assistant Town-Privy Council's Prototonarius?"

"True enough," interposes brother Claus, the rich butcher. "And the fluttering speech of your whole brotherly Kroll on the occasion; and the daily approval of the whole Rathschaff ever since. That we know. We have heard it so often."

"And lo!" continues Mauler, bestowing a spiteful glance on the last speaker, "one fine day comes the dear Doctor Brandt, with a packet of *märchen* about violated frusts, usurious interests, ejected widows, and what not—string of lies invented and devised by certain envious persons—and—"

"And the Rathschaffers give credit to the *märchen*," puts in Peter Leckermann; "and send their Deputy-Assistant Town-Privy Council's Prototonarius to the Devil!"

"At the suggestion of Doctor Cornelius"—viciously from the wizened chirographer of next door.

"Send him to the Devil at the suggestion of good Doctor Cornelius," repeats the landlord of the Kaiserhof, dwelling on his little bit of 'uncertainty' of the gusto of version.

"One moment, fair friends," holding Mauler by the nose, and giving a final flourish of the steel over his chin. "Another such a start, my razor had slipped, and our gentle Doctor were rid of a dangerous foe."

A silly which convulses the audience. Otto Mauler! What a foe! "Ha! ha! ha!"

"Dangerous, quotha?" vociferates the scrivener, starting up with the towel still about his neck. "By Peter and Paul, he shall rue the day that beggared Otto Mauler! See!—grabbing at old Jürgen's pointed scissors, and—my eye, again and—fish! crash! he stabs his weapon deep into the wooden counter."

Once more the audience holds its sides for laughter. Once more the portly burghers jeer, and point, and mock at dangerous Otto! murderous Otto! tremendous Otto Mauler! But the look is too enormous, and the gesture too determined, and the fade all at once from their memory. So they remember the laughable scene, and talk about it a good deal during the next few days.

And the butt of their witticisms, still trembling with impotent rage, sallies forth into the market-place, muttering threats deep and deep, and smooching and kissing his fingers. A few stars bring him into the shadow of the Domkirche. He stops him. He has a visit on hand—important, as attest his clean-shaven cheeks. Better perhaps turn into the Cathedral for a few moments, and cool down. There he can collect his scattered thoughts, plan out his campaign. Wherefore he shuffles across the great doors, signs himself with a vicious dab of holy water, and seeks out a quiet corner.

Apparently it is some festival, for High Mass is just over. The fragrant spirals of incense still hang about the lofty roof screen. Far above, among the black rafters, sweet boys' voices are dying away in a last "Ora gratias." On Gothic pillar and marble finials rests the dim religious light in splashes of prismatic glory; and the subdued manner of the little crowd of worshippers that is melting slowly under the porch bears eloquent witness to the wisdom of those who, building a House of Prayer, made it beautiful exceedingly. Nor is the grandeur of the sacred face without its effect on the scrivener, devoid of imagination as he is. But just as he is beginning to regain some command over his vindictive wrath, and it subsides from his ugly face into his uglier heart, the echoes of approaching footsteps attract his notice, and he finds himself face to face with Xalostros—the subject of his thoughts—the object of his proposed visit. Fortunately indeed! After all, even a cathedral is not without its use.

"Well met, Excellence," he cries with effusion; "I was just about leaving this—a disdainful wave of the hand—" for your house without the walls."

The Hakim looks on him coldly. This cringing but confident familiarity has long been a source of irritation to him. But his rising reputation is to a great extent at the scrivener's mercy. To make an enemy of such a man were to court ugly disclosures. And upon how slight a foundation, alas, do the best of reputations rest!

"It is on business of moment that I would see you," returns Xalostros; "for otherwise I must plead the manifold claims of my vocation—"

"Of moment, Excellence?" breaks in Otto, unabashed; "nay, of the very greatest moment."

"In that case," the Hakim answers, crossing himself with edifying gravity as they pass out of the building, "follow me, but at a distance. The child is with me. Other attendance were ostentation."

"H'm!" grants the scrivener to himself "times are changed. But devil take me if I can desecry much difference 'twixt your pride of them, and your humility of now."

Under the lofty portal Stello awaits his master, no longer brave in silks and satins as of yore, but clad in sober grey, with demure white bands under his chin. The contrast of sad-coloured clothes and golden locks is not, however, without its charm; and on the pretty boy rests every approving glance from the stately dames who have been working out their day's salvation before the high altar this fine morning.

Taking the Hakim's big Missal, he offers him his arm, and the two move away slowly across the rough stones of the market. The eighteen months that have passed since his peace made his peace with Doctor Cornelius have left no trace upon his impassable features. Apparently he is no whit altered, though, at his time of life, men age fast. Outwardly he is the same. But inwardly there is a change. There is a demon of discontent and disappointment at work within him, gnawing away all that an adventurous life and an unscrupulous career have left of good in his heart. And yet his projects have succeeded. He has in the course of a year and a half added to his smattering of medicine such sound knowledge as enables him to render valuable assistance to the old man from whose teaching he has acquired it; among the lower classes his ministrations and kindly smile have gained him much popularity; the fame of some of his cures has secured him a large practice. And he has managed, with the help of his friend Rudolph Kroll, to spread abroad a rumour that he is indeed engaged upon the experiments for which the sensational exploits of his first few months in Nürnberg were to provide the money; a rumour which has gone far to allay the suspicions of the astute Town Councillors, and to mitigate the severity of the watch they had set upon his actions.

Moreover at various times, he has been able to render aid to a safe quarter at Frankfurt; so that now the most of his plunder is far beyond the reach of any sudden attack of the fickle populace. But though so far his projects have succeeded, such success is more disappointing than failure. For the main object of his machinations is still unattained; he is no wiser than he was when he entered the town concerning the secret of the aged Doctor's wealth. Many times has he tried to get it out of him; often has he inveigled him into discussions on the relative probabilities of the various short cuts to opulence that have ever been suggested; but never once has he been able to drop so much as a hint as to the source from which he fills his coffers. Together they have explored many hidden places in the speculative science of which the Hakim is so past a master, yet the great secret is still untold. And, worse than all, now that he despairs of compassing his real object, Xalostros cannot follow his savings to Frankfurt and survey the old chaotic life where he left it; but must perforce drudge on at his post, for he is still under *espionage*, the Town Council have made up their minds to keep him where he is, and they are eminently able to carry out their intentions.

A soulful vengeful man—possessed by seven devils of avice—hated in his heart, and honey on his lips. Scarcely a citizen whom one would detain against his will in a quiet town like this. But municipal bodies are not moved by such considerations as influence ordinary minds.

Xalostros passes Doctor Brandt's house without stopping, and pursues his way down the Alt-Mauer Gasse, which runs parallel to the old ramparts and takes its name thereafter, till he comes to the Western Gate. Then, crossing the drawbridge, he turns down a side street in the direction of his starting point, and arrives at last at a mean-looking building, scarcely more than old wall by the hundred yards of garden, and faced by a labyrinth of tumble-down hovels and dirty lanes which extends to the fortifications of the outer line of circumvallation.

It belongs to Cornelius, and, at his desire, on the death of the late tenant some three weeks ago, Xalostros moved into it, his remaining belongings hither. Not that it is a convenient residence for him, for it is at least half-an-hour's walk to the old Doctor's house by the shortest way round, though in the tantalising proximity thereto of a couple of minutes' flight over the battlements. But he is here hence forth, and Cornelius would not hear of a denial, his close, his manner was almost prompt. Nevertheless the Hakim often sighs for a pair of wings, or a postern in the wall. The half-hour seems so long, sometimes.

So soon as Otto Mauler arrives he is led by Stello along certain devious passages into a large room on the ground floor, where Xalostros awaits him. The room is not without pretensions to architectural beauty. From massive pillars at each corner there rise light flying buttresses which meet in the centre, and support an antique lamp of elaborate construction; and the tracery of the windows, and the quaint tapestry which covers the spaces between the columns, give the apartment a dignity hardly warranted by the external appearance of the house.

"Excuse," blurts out the scrivener; "I have lost my place. That infernal old—"

"Stay!—very quietly—" thou hast told me that before. But is that thy urgent business?"

Otto Mauler takes fright at the Hakim's manner. Is he going to send him away empty-handed?

"No, indeed! But I want gold. That is my business. Importance enough, to me, to see—of my Transparency, too, mayhap. Being nervous, he becomes impatient. An almost invariable rule.

Xalostros keeps silence for some long minutes. The scrivener expresses a refusal, and braces himself for a storm of threats. At last,

"Nothing more reasonable, dear young man,"—with a smile of surpassing sweetness. "Here, take this purse; and, though now I would be alone, know that Xalostros never forgets a friend—I nor spare an enemy."

Overjoyed at his success, Otto secures the money and departs. Strange to say, however, the Hakim's urbanity sends something of a chill down his back. Bah! it is not a particular friend of that same?

As the sound of the visitor's triumphant exit dies away, Otto's friend rises from his seat, carefully locks the door, and begins to pace up and down the wadded boards in deep thought. The mark has dropped from his face. He looks quite vexed. Indeed, Otto himself might have undergone another seizure of a chilly nature if he had stopped to watch the course of his friend's vexation.

After a time Xalostros consults into a chair, and puts himself out a draught of potent Xeres wine. So he is to be subjected to a systematic levying of black mail by a paltry scribbler—a continual brandishing of the sword of Damocles by one whom he could almost crush with a look—because he happens to live in an age when a pretty firm is easily ruined, and which is not a very pleasant thing by the fangs of a crowd? So the irksome respectability of his life is to be rendered still more unbearable by the knowledge that its continuance depends, not on his own pleasure, but on the withholding or promulgation of charges, the truth of which is usually tested by the submission of the accused to the blaze of a bundle of faggots, or the embrace of the deep river.

And the reward of his long self-denial, the fulfilment of his cunningly devised plans—is that for ever to be denied him? Is this to be the result of his brilliant *coup de main* that morning so long ago? Which has been his reward for all the pains he has taken, the mystery he would give so much to solve still remains, and seems likely to remain, insoluble.

Dark thoughts of vengeance fill across his mind. He is not accustomed to be thus baffled. For less than this he has rid

himself of better men than Otto Mauler. For less than this he has well, inherited the property of greater men than—

"Cornelius! Gracious God in heaven!"—recoiling, shrinking, paling, trembling. For there stands Doctor Brandt at his elbow.

His hoarse whisper has hardly broken the silence before he recovers himself: "Welcome, dear master, as always. But, is good sooth, thou didst startle me for a moment."

"He! he!" quavers the old man. "A little jest. A little jest. How entered I? Why, through the door belike."

"See; it is fast locked!" trying the heavy bolts.

"Art sure there is none other—with such senile archness—" one that didst forget to secure? Nay, I will not trifle with thee. Listen."

He takes a seat, and proceeds: "If, who so lately dwelt in this house was, unknown to thee, a fellow-worker with us. While we practised the rules of Galen, or studied the Higher Physics, this man carried out in the bowels of the earth the operations whence I derive such wealth. A pause—" He is dead. Thou hast his place. Now dost thou understand wherefore I forced thee hither?"

"At last! At last it has come!" The Hakim turns aside lest the shout of victory should be too legible in his eyes. His gratified avarice, welling up and boiling over, falls in a heavy splash of thanks at his master's feet.

"Not another word," interposes Cornelius; "why, man, I waxy. Thy task will be no sinecure. And, as for this signal mark of confidence, glad enough am I to have so trustworthy a comrade wherein to confide." Then, rising hurriedly—"But say, canst come at once? I am eager to begin."

Apparently so also is Xalostros, for he stands braced for action, cheeks flushed, hands clenched.

"Lead on," he says.

Going up to one of the corners of the chamber, Doctor Brandt presses a trefoil carved in the column as high as arm can reach. Swiftly, noiselessly, the stone cylinder turns as on a socket, and reveals a narrow rift into which the Doctor mutters. Then, bidding Xalostros follow his example, and touching another spring, he disappears, and the column looks as impenetrable and solid as before.

In a moment the two are standing together at the top of a steep narrow staircase. In some moments more they are at its foot; and, passing along a dimly-lighted passage, they arrive at a massive door of iron-bound oak. When it closes behind them, they have exchanged the damp chill atmosphere of the passage for the warmth of an antechamber, where, for the first time, Cornelius stops and addresses his companion.

"See!"—turning a lock on the right—"this room is my laboratory." Then, turning another on the left—"and this, a secret way to the city moat, whither we take our refuge. And this"—with his hand on a third lock—"is my mine of wealth; my Eldorado; my Golconda!"

A turn of the wrist, and they are in the very strangest chamber it has ever been the fortune of Xalostros to inspect. It is spacious as the Great Hall in the Rathshaus, low as the crypt beneath the Domkirche. Its walls are damp; and a faint brackish odour and a chilly haze heighten the gloom. But that which is most notable there is the sheet of water which, but for a narrow passage along the walls, occupies the whole of the space there.

"And now tell me," says the old man, taking up something from a small heap piled up by his side, "what may this be for fish?"

"It is an oyster," answers Xalostros, strangely agitated, despite himself.

"It is the *Avicula*, or, as some call it, the *Melagrina margaritifera*. It is the Pearl Oyster. There are hundreds below there. And now dost thou wonder at the prophecy of the horoscope that didst interpret, 'His wealth shall an oyster-shell contain?'"

UST six months have elapsed. Bright, white, merry Christmas has blessed the city of Birthdays, is close at hand. By this time the Hakim has learned much concerning the cultivation of pearls, and their preparation for the markets of Venice and Amsterdam. How, after gathering, the oyster is left to putrify and die for greater ease in the opening; how the Jew is polished with pearl powder, and how, drilled, of the seasons of harvest, and of the proportion of precious to valueless; lastly, of the cunning proceeding whereby Cornelius assimilates the brine in his tank to the consistency and temperature of the far-famed waters of Condaty.

But there his learning stops. He knows of the existence of this cunning proceeding; but Cornelius refuses to reveal its secret even to him, and, without it, all his other information is of scant use to any scheme.

"Patience! Patience!" says the old man, in answer to his partner's hints or entreaties. "Some day thou shalt know all. This"—touching a little key that hangs from his neck—"this opens a casket wherein my secret lies. Some day I will give it thee."

Or, when his mood is merry, he tantalizes him on this wise: "In the year of Our Lord's Grace 1537, there came to Seville from the fisheries of Colombia alone 697 pound-weight of the treasure; and my waters are as fruitful as those about Ceylon; and they are known to excel the Western fishery-fold. Ay! it is a brave secret, that of mine."

On which occasions, the Hakim's smile of assent is so sweet that it is pleasant to see—so long as Cornelius is looking at him.

And it came to pass one fine day, after Dr. Brandt had been more than usually facetious, and Xalostros had, in consequence, positively weathered his countenance in smiles, that there was a little row between this last worthy and Otto Mauler—the scrivener very dumb, and the medicus very thoughtful, but to the point.

"Better open war than such persecution," he says at last. "Dost thou, man; and rid me of thy presence."

"So he defies me," snarls Otto, rather surprised at the determination of his master. "Well, well! But look to thyself, Xalostros, for I will bring thee to stake and faggots yet!"

And he is shambling out of the room, mumbling inarticulate threats and blasphemies, when a sudden thought flashes across the pale evil face behind him.

"It could be done!" he thinks. "One stroke would rid me of both. It shall be done!"

And so he calls the scrivener back.

"It was but to prove that I spoke, good lad," he says, with a chuckle, "and a very laugh. 'Why should I deny thee was more worthy thy important services? See, here is gold. Nay, more, I myself will plead for thee with good Doctor Brandt, and thou shalt be reinstated in thy post.'"

So sudden a change could hardly deceive the cunning notary; but he is by no means displeased at the turn matters have taken, as a satisfactory proof of the power he wields over his master, and promises well for the future.

"I might have asked for more," he thinks. "Never mind, though; I can but bleed him to a better tune next time."

And so the Hakim, who has been in some manner the was only-conceivable plan that has so completely altered his demeanour towards his drunken hireling, and is ready to take the first step.

"Listen, good Otto," he begins—"I have of late received letters from a sure quarter warning me that my life is in danger. I dare



3RD JAN.—There is no doubt about Diana being a fine girl —has very pretty manners too -- must be careful, Carlyon, my boy!) To-day Mallow disturbed us when I was reading to her. He looked fierce and banged the door. Believe he is a suitor.

4TH JAN.—Business old gentleman waited on me with challenge from Mallow. Choice of weapons with me, of course.



5TH JAN.—I chose the weapons—whips. Snow had fallen in the night. We fought from 8.37 to 10.14 A.M. Feel quite sore.



6TH JAN.—To avoid becoming a maker of strife left Marley Hall—laden with letters for town. The Squire asked me for next Christmas.



8TH JAN.—Fleet Street again. Dined at old place—principally off her miniature. Will write to-morrow



NIGHT



MORNING

A CHRISTMAS TRANSFORMATION

no longer go forth unarmed. I must e'en purchase me a poniard or half-sword, or what; and, with that, and a potent amulet I have about me, I shall walk my round with greater confidence."

"No better armourer," hiccups the scrivener, "in all Nuremberg than little Carl Nagelmann."

"Then do thou," resumes Xalostros, "look in upon Master Nagelmann, and secure for me a weapon of the best steel money can procure. Thou art more versed in such matters than I. Nay, have I not always held that Otto Mauler had more of the swash-buckler about him than of the man of law and slave of the desk?"

"He! he! he! noble Hakim!"—with a laugh of delighted vanity—"can you see for a fatterer? But they do say that I was born for a Free Lance. And, by St. Michael, would I could see much, even now, to exchange the Pandects of Justinian for pike and morion, and ruffie it as bravely as the smartest man-at-arms of the city!"

And he betakes himself to strut him about the room, with unsteady gait and truculent mien, until he lurches against a settle, and sinks down thereon for want of better support.

"So that it be a good blade," continues his master, "I care little what manner of weapon it is. But, look ye; see that the hilt be richly chased, and have something of a hollow wherein I can store the amulet I spoke of. I shall not be chary as to a gold piece or so for the fashioning thereof."

"Trust me for aught appertaining to the art and practice of War," responds Mauler. "Give me the talisman, and I will bring thee the best-tempered dagger in Nuremberg before sunset to-morrow."

And so, perfectly contented with his morning's work, he sallies forth and resorts to the Kaiserhof, where he discusses, and magnificently pays for, a stoup of old wine, to the edification of Master Claus, butcher, and Master Leckermann, landlord, who, like most of his friends, are ever ready to prove their friendship by helping him in the consumption of good liquor when he can pay for it, and by dissuading him therefrom when he cannot.

Then, what more natural than that they should accompany him to the armourer's, and assist him in the choosing of a *misericorde*, the keenest, best poised, most ornamental, and most viperish in the shop?

Or that they should listen with the greatest interest to his voluminous and over-iterated directions as to the disposal of the amulet within the hilt?

Or that, being puffed up with conceit and copious libations, he should allow, or rather induce, them to imagine that he is giving the order in his own name, and that the costly weapon is intended for his own protection and adornment?

What more natural, indeed? So natural that Xalostros, who anticipated all this when he entrusted the mortal Otto with his commission, cannot assuently claim for such ordinary foresight any special credit.

But, accurately as he gauges the character of this promising youth, he is not the less bound to fulfil his promise to him. So he repairs to Doctor Brandt's house where, forgetting, in the Christian-like spirit for which he is so remarkable, any annoyance that his accomplice may have caused him, he eloquently pleads his cause, that is, so far as obtaining him an audience is concerned.

"The fellow," he says, "is a pestilent, persistent, overbearing knave. He will not believe I have power, no power with the great Cornelius. Do thou receive him, and threaten him with stocks or prison. Chide him roundly. So will there be an end of his pretension. For I can do nothing with him."

And the audience is fixed for five of the clock on the afternoon.

Next, he wends his way to the Cathedral, where he has speech of Father Caspar, whom he finds drilling the choir-boys in their anthem parts: "*Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bone voluntatis*,"—and invites to break bread with him at five of the clock on the after-morrow. The invitation having been accepted, for, besides bread for breaking, there are bottles of ripe age to be cracked, and savoury meats to be tasted at the little house without the walls, Xalostros goes home, and meditates upon the transitory nature of things sublimar.

The dagger comes home according to contract made and had by Otto Mauler, and apparently meets with the approval of its owner, for, as he passes his thumb along its keen edge from carven hilt to bloodthirsty point, there is a smile upon his pale face that causes even the unimpassioned scrivener to shudder and quake in his clephantine shoes.

"Ay," chuckles the Hakim; "it will be a tough epidermis, indeed, that this will not pierce."

And then he bestows it in a place of safety along with certain other useful articles he keeps by him; and, in a few words, informs Mauler of the result of his interview with Doctor Brandt.

"Stay," he says, just as the scrivener is leaving the room, with a profusion of oily thanks. "Thou hadst best present thyself some ten minutes before the hour. The good sage waxes old and impatient, and will wait for no man."

So, having settled their business, they part in amity, and with mutual respect.

But, though things are so satisfactory, Xalostros gets but little sleep that night, none at all the next. The boy Stello, who, in a baggard looks, and inquires anxiously every other hour how he does. It is a megrim—a touch of fever—and will pass, he is told. He is a good lad, a friendly young rogue; but there is naught to fear. This evening it will have passed.

And the "noiseless foot of Time" plods westward with the sun, until the city clocks chime forth the half-hour after four, when Xalostros makes his final arrangements for the due entertaining of Father Caspar at five.

Then the three-quarters ring out in the wintry air. What is the Hakim about? He is locking his door, opening the revolving pillar, hurrying along the secret passage. Surely he cannot purpose to finish the drilling of those pearls in the laboratory, with a guest on his way to supper? No; for he passes through it almost at a run, and so along another passage, up a flight of steps, and to a door whereat he stops and listens.

Another moment, he touches a spring, the well-oiled hinges yield a finger's span; he listens again. And this is what he hears:—

"O, and this is the wherefore of Doctor Brandt's condescension!"—in Otto's most strident tones—"Once and for all I am to hold my peace! He threatens me with the stocks, doth he? I am to be incarcerated for a vagabond, am I? Look ye, Cornelius, I go now; I am but a poor man, and of small account; but, by Heaven above and Hell below, I will be revenged on thee yet!"

A sound of retreating footsteps; a parting execration; the slamming of a door; and so, silence.

Then Xalostros pushes again stealthily, and looks into the room. It is Doctor Brandt's study. Exhausted with the war of words, and trembling with rage, the old man lies back in his great chair, and plucks nervously at the fringe. Rouse thee, old man! That white face is comely behind thee! Those evil eyes are glittering, but not so brightly as something in that glittered hand!

A ghastly thud. And then Cornelius Brandt, Doctor of Physics, lies dead, with a poniard of the very latest fashion deep in his heart. Quick! the little key that hangs about his neck—the casket, precious casket! Now to peel the handle, and drop it at his side. So—Ugh! what an ugly little snake that twinkles there! Through the secret door—away down the passage—into his own room—a deep draught from that flagon—Ah!

Five of the clock. And chiming merrily all over Nuremberg. And hardly have the last notes died away, when Xalostros is welcoming good Father Caspar to all there is of this world's good things in his poor house. That worthy follows him, nothing loth, into the supper-room, humming to himself the solo of his sweet anthem, "*Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax*."

The Hakim is so satisfied with his day's work that he chimes in; but, finding the words somewhat difficult to pronounce, soon desists.

The trial of Otto Mauler, sworn of the *Amwallschafft*, and late Deputy-Assistant Town-Privy-Council's Protontarius, for the doing to death of Doctor Cornelius Brandt, is an event which will long be remembered by the good people of Nuremberg. It acquires additional interest from the fact that the accused loudly protests his innocence; and, further, accuses one Xalostros, late Hakim to the Solhan of Arabia Felix, but now of this town, practitioner in medicine, of the commission of the said foul murder.

The great Hall of Judgment is crowded in every part. All the rank and fashion, wealth and beauty, of Nuremberg is present, despite the urgency of their shopping purpose. But even the duty of purchasing presents for Christmas must pale before the interest of a trial such as this. Vice and piety stand there on tiptoe cheek by jowl; and, despite the vigilance of the stalwart halberdiers by the great doors, there is no small sprinkling of rags and tatters at back who listen with impartiality, indifferent as to which of the accused be convicted so only that there be a conviction. Apparently the cause is watched by a small audience of sparrows, who are watching the case from the rafters and the window-sills, for they keep up a most irrelevant flow of chatter throughout the proceedings.

On a raised dais at the end of the hall sit the judges, looking dreadfully business-like in black velvet and ermine. Below them, the officials of the Court; the scarlet-clad executioner leaning on a fearsome two-handed sword that makes Otto Mauler's neck ache to look upon; and a host of men of law. Seats have been set apart for the sex, a very flower-bed for colour and comeliness. There sit Marie, the Burgomaster's wife, with her friend Bräuhilde Kreil, and Charlotte, and Trüdchen, and the rest of their circle; all to a woman, indignant at the aspersions upon the dear Hakim's fair fame. And then—ladies; ladies; burgesses; soldiers; populace.

While Xalostros, who has been accommodated with a chair, sits, in deepest mourning, attended by Stello, and comforted by the presence and countenance of Father Caspar, in full view of the public and of Otto Mauler. Otto has made one or two desperate efforts to break from the guard and fly at his good master's throat; but it only tells against him, and he is heavily ironed, so Xalostros can afford to shrug his shoulders and ply the good water-knives.

And so, to the twittering of the sparrows, the shining of the sun, the hoarse murmur of the crowd, the monotonous examination of witnesses and oration of advocates, the trial proceeds; and, towards evening, is ripe for judgment.

And judges, delivering the same, say that—

"Seeing,"

"That the accused, Otto Mauler, is notoriously of bad character, and was dismissed from his office therefore;

"That the murdered man was alive before admitting him to audience, and died immediately thereafter;

"That the dagger found in the body was, on the oath of Claus, butcher, and Leckermann, innkeeper, purchased by and for the accused;

"That his assertion as to the dagger having been by him delivered unto Xalostros, physician, upon his testimony alone, and has been denied upon oath by the said Xalostros;

"That the murder was committed at or about five of the clock, and that the Reverend Father, Canon Caspar, has testified to being received to supper by the said Xalostros at his house without the walls, at that hour, and on that day;

"That it is fully an half-hour's walk from the abode of the late Brandt to that of the said Xalostros, whereby the plea of *alibi* by him set forth is fully established;

"And, lastly, that the accused, upon the oath of Galenitz, chirurgien, Leckermann, innkeeper, Claus, butcher, and Jüngen, barber-dentist, did one day at the said barber's shop threaten the death of Doctor Brandt, and with a sharp instrument—to wit, a pair of scissors—illustrate the manner thereof;

"The High Tribunal doth decree—

"That the head of the said accused shall be severed from his body, at nine of the clock, in the open market-place, on the morning next following the delivery of judgment."

Then the assemblage draws a deep breath.

But Xalostros draws the deepest.

The night has passed. The sun has risen in all his glory to do honour to this bright Yule-tide. And, now, in two minutes the great town clock will strike nine.

At an open window, overlooking the market-place, with a table before him, and on it a casket of cunning workmanship, sits the Hakim.

On a scaffold also overlooking the market-place, with a priest brandishing a crucifix before him, and an executioner poised a mighty sword at his side, kneels Otto Mauler.

Between them seethes an eager, expectant, affrighted, hysterical, callous, hot-hot-poth of humanity—lords; ladies; burgesses; soldiers; populace.

It is very frosty this morning. You can hear every now and then a snatch of public opinion.

"Only a minute more, cry the populace.

"Ugh, the coward! Look rather at his white face," sneer the soldiers.

"A desperate villain, indeed," quaver the burgesses.

"I really must hide my eyes," slimper the ladies.

"Ha! ha! Mark the pretty darts looking through their fingers," laugh the lords.

Then chime forth the melodious quarters, and the great bell begins to boom out nine.

At the eighth stroke Otto catches sight of Xalostros, who waves his white hand at him in mocking farewell. He opens his mouth to curse him; but the sword flashes in the sun and falls. So also does Otto's head.

"At last!" cries Xalostros. And then he takes up the casket for which he has risked his neck, and opens it with a trembling hand. He takes out a paper. One glance at it—and with a mighty oath, more akin to the roar of baffled tiger than human voice, falls in a heap on the floor.

In an hour after, Stello, alarmed at his long silence, breaks open the door. He finds the master dancing softly about the room, and, ever and anon, stopping before a mirror to grimace diabolically therein.

"Come hither, good gentleman," he gibbers; "I am an oyster from Condaty. Feel down my throat. There is a great pearl there that shall hide my name, there is no doubt of it—I am an oyster! And here are full directions how to propagate me. But they are in cypher—and the key word is dead with Cornelius."

And it was a cruel thing to keep him until his dying day under restraint; for, if you are an oyster, why should you not be allowed to cut yourself open, and other oysters, too, to get at the beautiful pearls inside?

Lady Flora's Strange Adventures

IN SEARCH OF A DOCTOR

BY ARTHUR LOCKER

SHE was a beautiful creature, most symmetrically shaped. Her large soft eyes inspired both confidence, and affection. With the exception of an infantile malady to which her family were ordinarily liable, her ladyship had hitherto never had a day's serious illness in her life. But just now she felt altogether out of sorts. She had a swimming in her head; she had pains in all her legs; her pretty nose, which ought to have been as cold as ice, was hot and dry; and when she went for her favourite run with the pony-chaise, she was obliged, although the pony was elderly and by no means swift, to ask to be taken inside.

Clearly there was something the matter with Lady Flora. She stood gazing at her lovely reflection in the long mirror which hung in the dining-room, and thought she had never beheld such a melancholy visage. "I hope I am not going mad," she said to herself. "Perhaps these are the premonitory symptoms." Just then Sir Robert Pinkerton, the owner of Basildon Grange, where she was staying, came in, and, as was his wont, offered to caress her. But Lady Flora did not respond with her usual animation to his blandishments; on the contrary, she took an early opportunity of quitting the room, and crept up the stairs to the nursery, hoping to find some consolation in the society of her children.

It was a dull, drizzly November morning, so the children were all in-doors, and longing for some amusement. The arrival of Lady Flora, therefore, was hailed with delight.

"Good mornin', lady Flora," said little Dolly Pinkerton, aged four, making a ceremonious curtsy in imitation of her mother.

"Good mornin'." What said we do, Dolly? "Jacky, who was rising seven, and who was possessed of imaginative powers, at once proposed that Lady Flora should be a horse, that Baby should be a prisoner of war, and that he and Dolly should be two knights, who were in the act of conveying the said prisoner on horseback to the donjon-keep of their castle.

But Lady Flora didn't gallop round the room with the alacrity which she generally displayed on these occasions; she went slowly and dully, and when Jack actually had the audacity to incite her to greater speed by touching her with his knightly spurs (in reality, by prodding her with the points of Nurse's scissors) she resented the indignity by suddenly stopping short. The result was that Baby was unbored, and set up a roar. Then there arose a general hullabaloo, and finally Nurse came in like an avenging spirit, dealing impartial slaps all round. Lady Flora quitted the room in dudgeon, followed by an exclamation from Dolly to the effect that she was "a cross old ting dis mornin'."

Lady Flora felt very unwell. Her head was as heavy as a lump of lead. She determined to consult somebody. Who should that somebody be? "I cannot do better," she thought, "than ask Ali Baba, the Persian. Wisdom comes from the East."

She found Ali Baba just where she expected to find him, sitting in the hall, in front of a blazing fire. He was a handsome fellow, with a large pair of whiskers, he wore a beautiful warm white coat, and had round his neck a collar of crimson velvet, ornamented with imitation gold sequins. He looked extremely cosy and exceedingly sleepy, as he sat blinking his great Oriental eyes.

Lady Flora addressed him in what she conceived to be the courteous Eastern fashion:

"Salam Aleikoum!"

"How do you do, lady Flora?" replied the Persian, politely. He prided himself on his knowledge of the English language.

"Thanks. I am not very well."

"Oh! I am sorry, my dear lady, I am very sorry. But what can you expect? This rascally climate! A spring of east winds, a summer of chilly rains, an autumn of fog, a winter of sleet and slush. What can you expect? Now in the dominions of His Majesty the Shah—"

"It is, of course, different."

"Precisely, my charming lady Flora! It is amazingly different. Here I mean the year round. Here I never know the sensation of warmth, except when I am crouching over the fire."

"But what do you advise me to do, Ali Baba, to recover my health?"

"I advise you, most sweet gazelle-eyed lady, to do the exact opposite of what I have done. I came against my will, from beloved Persia to this horrible shivery-shakery England. Reverse the process. Persuade Sir Robert to pay your passage (he paid mine), and visit the dominions of His Majesty the Shah."

"But, Ali, I am a native of Great Britain, my ancestors have lived here time out of mind. Can't I be cured, and allowed to stay at home?"

"No, angelic Hour, said the Persian, with a great yawn. "Impossible. But in the dominions of His Majesty the Shah—"

Here he fell fast asleep.

"Psha!" exclaimed Lady Flora indignantly (and unintentionally making a pun), "psa, he is a selfish creature, this Ali Baba, with all his outside show of politeness. I'll go somewhere else for advice." And with these words she presently stepped out into the garden.

II.

"LL go and see my cheery friend, C. C. Cox," said Lady Flora to herself. "Perhaps he can help me. His ancestors came from still further East than Ali Baba, and therefore he ought to be even wiser than that deceitful Persian. They came all the way from Cochinchina," said Lady Flora, Mr. Cox's full name, it may be remarked, as given in his letters, was Chancy Clever Cox, Esq.

Thereupon Lady Flora leisurely crossed the lawn, went through the shrubbery, past the forcing-houses, and so, by way of the kitchen-garden, into the stable-yard. She looked about for Mr. Cox, a jovial, noisy fellow, who was usually to be heard as well as seen, and he was nowhere visible. Presently, however, she espied against the south wall of the stable, which a sickly ray of sunshine was trying to warm, the five Mrs. Coxes, all of a row, looking very dismal, with their shoulders up to their ears.

Gentle reader, be not startled at the expression—the five Mrs. Coxes. Mr. Cox was a very married man. It was customary in the Cox family. Five ladies claimed him as their liege lord.

"Good morning, ladies," said Lady Flora, addressing the assembled party with a comprehensive inclination of her head, for she knew that each was jealous of the rest of the sisterhood; "Good morning. Can you tell me where I shall find Mr. Cox?"

To her surprise they all burst into a chorus of loud lamentation.

"Oh, dear! oh, dear! I don't know, haven't you heard?"

"No. What is the matter?"

"My beloved husband is gone for ever," sobbed Mrs. Cox.

No. 1.

"Your beloved husband, ma'am! My beloved husband, you mean," indignantly exclaimed Mrs. Cox No. 2.

"My beloved husband, hussies, you ought to say," fiercely cried Mrs. Cox No. 3.

"He cared for none of you except me," tearfully murmured Mrs. Cox No. 4.

"He always vowed I was his special little popsy-wopsy—Here the poor creature fairly broke down.

Mrs. Cox No. 5, more of a philosopher,

"Fellow-wives," she said, "at a time like this don't let us wrangle. But if anybody has a right to speak of our conjugal relations I think I have. I kept company with Cox before you four were out of the eggshell, if I may use the expression. But I am not aware that Mr. Cox loved me any the better for being the oldest. Rather the other way, I am afraid. The male sex is very fickle, as I darsay your ladyship is aware. However," she concluded with a sigh, "it's all one now, for he's gone."

"Gone where?" asked Lady Flora.

"Ah! that's more than I can tell. He was on the perch at sunset last night, and he wasn't on the perch at sunrise this morning. So much is certain. All else is conjecture. Whether he has been taken, or whether he has gallivanted, it is not for me to say." And with these words Mrs. Cox No. 5 resumed her doleful occupation of leaning against the stable wall.

Lady Flora addressed a few expressions of condolence to the bery of widows, and then walked slowly away.

III.

RESENTLY she encountered Mr. Gobbler strutting along, his custom always, but more and more, he was rather a loud-speaking, bullying fellow, still Lady Flora, who was the pink of politeness, stopped, and pleasantly wished him good day.

"And, Mr. Gobbler," she added, "you are a person of age and experience. I should be so thankful if you would give me your advice. I am very unwell, and I cannot discover what is the matter with me."

"Sorry to hear it, marm, sorry to hear it," blurted out old Gobbler, "but certainly in my line, I've seen. And I never give advice. I've known why, marm? Because nobody ever takes it. Ha! ha! ha!" Here old Gobbler burst into an apoplectic chackle, and seemed as if he was going to choke. Kind-hearted Lady Flora would like to have patted him on the back, but she thought he would perhaps resent the liberty. Presently he recovered himself, and proceeded to say: "What's more, marm, asking your pardon, I've got enough to think about with my own belongings at this time of year. Terrible bad time coming next month."

"What time, Mr. Gobbler? Why, I always think Christmas is a very merry time."

"Most likely it was because Lady Flora had such a distressingly bad headache, and this made her speak without consideration, for otherwise she would certainly have remembered that, however pleasant for others, Christmas is a very dismal season for Mr. Gobbler and his kindred. Only last Christmas she had partaken of a breast-bone which had once belonged to a cousin of the stalwart personage with whom she was now conversing, and had enjoyed it exceedingly."

"Very true, maybe, for such as you, marm," cried old Gobbler, bitterly, "but for us poor creatures, it means theft, murder, and sudden death!"

"I beg pardon, I humbly beg pardon—I forgot. I did not mean to hurt your feelings. I forgot that."

"You wouldn't forget so easily if you were me," he retorted, "Not but what I've got accustomed to it. Christmas after Christmas I've seen so many of my children and grandchildren carried off that I'm kind of case-hardened. They don't know what's in store for 'em, poor innocent things," he added, in a hoarse whisper, "and so I speak as merrily as I can, and you may be sure, Lady Flora, I don't tell 'em what goes on in such a place as Leadenhall Market, or describe what a poultryer's shop looks like at Christmas time."

"You would indeed be cruel to do so. Good morning."

"Well, marm," shouted old Gobbler, as he turned away, "as you've been civil, I will give you one bit of advice. If you want medical treatment, don't go to hantamoots, go to a regularly qualified medical practitioner!"

Perhaps Mr. Gobbler was right, but Lady Flora did not know where to find a personage of this sort. She became more and more despondent, and she determined to get out into the fields, where she would be alone with her own thoughts, and where perhaps she might find some simple herbal remedy for her ailments.

But she could not find the friend of the fields without passing by Mr. Barker's habitation, she did not like Mr. Barker. Indeed, nobody liked Mr. Barker. Except the Squire, Sir Robert Pinkerton (whom he feared), and old Jenny Bagges, the gamekeeper (the only being in the world for whom he had any affection), Mr. Barker saluted everybody who went by with a torrent of abuse. But, poor wretch! his disposition was canted by the miserable life he led. He had never committed any offence against the laws of his country, and yet he was chained by the neck to a post, and had no other shelter from the elements but a disused beer barrel. His palatial appearance, too, was a reminder of his position. His mouth, garnished with a shining set of teeth, while one of his eyes was nearly closed by a hurt received in a fight. Fighting, indeed, when he got the chance, was his only relaxation. As Lady Flora passed by his house, he came out, and addressed her in a hoarse whispering voice.

"Hallo! my lady harlot, going hout for a hairing? Whish I was you, and you was me. Guess you wouldn't relish being whished up here, morn, noon, and night, rain, sunshine, and freeze, eh! old gal!"

"Please don't be unkind, Mr. Barker. I'm very unwell."

"Hunwell!" he roared, "hunwell! No wonder you're hunwell! Look at the luxurious messes you eats, the 'ot snacks, and the soups, and the fricasseed chicken! Ah! I knows yer, Lady F., you're a rare one to tuck in. Hunwell! And here am I fobbed off with thirty hiled panaches as 'ud turn the stomach of a Haffican hyena!"

"I'm sorry for you, Mr. Barker; but it isn't my fault."

"Tian? your fault," he sneered; "yes, it is your fault, the fault of you and all the other swillers that crouch down before your person. If you'd got any sperrit, we should have a regular bloody revolution. Mark my words, we shall have it one of these days. Combination's the word for it, my Lady Filippot, and that's what I'm waiting for. I'm an Internationalist, a Communist, a Nihilist! Them's Barker's sentiments. Combination, that's what we want. Why the London cab-horses alone, poor miserable creatures though they be, if they was to combine together, might have the 'ole blessed metropolis at their mercy."

With this peroration Mr. Barker retired into the recesses of his beer-barrel. Poor Lady Flora shuddered, and her nervous depression increased. She had never before heard Mr. Barker "let out" as he did on this occasion.

IV.

SHE sauntered down the lane, which was now dressed in the sober tints of late autumn, the carpet of red, brown, and yellow leaves felt refreshingly soft beneath her feet, and the twittering of the birds, though more subdued than in summer time, helped to revive her spirits. So when she came to the stile which led across the fields to Farmer Sibley's, she got over it nimbly enough, and was surprised at her own agility. The fence enclosed was a turnip-field, in the middle of which a flock of sheep, carefully herded in, were unconsciously increasing their fitness for the butcher's blade by assimilating turnips into mutton. The next enclosure was laid down in pasture, and contained no living inhabitants save three symmetrical cows and a cat, the donkey, and the donkey, in fact, who had the honour of carrying Master Jacky and Miss Dolly on his back, when his services were needed. Lady Flora purposely avoided these animals, and was about to enter the next field through a gap in the hedge, when she suddenly espied a small dapper individual in a black velvet coat. She seized him abruptly by the collar. He uttered a cry of alarm.

"Who is it?" he exclaimed, in a shrill voice. "Who is it? I don't see very well. Have the politeness to oblige me with your name."

"Dear Mr. Burrows," said Lady Flora, "don't be frightened, and accept a thousand apologies for my rude manner of saluting you. But you are so fond of your subterranean business, that, if I had not caught hold of you, in another moment you would have disappeared from view into the regions below."

"You don't mean malice, then, Lady Flora?" said the little fellow.

"Malice? No, indeed. On the contrary, I want you to help me. You see before you, my dear Mr. Burrows, a miserable invalid, and I want you to recommend a doctor."

"A doctor?" he said, with some eagerness in his tone. "Willingly. But I hope, Lady Flora, as soon as I have given you the name and address of the party I recommend, that you will return the favour by doing poor little me a kindness."

"With pleasure. How can I oblige you, Mr. Burrows?"

"Why, my dear lady, as you are on such intimate terms up at The Grange, could you not whisper into the ear of Sir Robert Pinkerton that he entertains a most unfounded prejudice against persons of my profession? Endeavour to persuade that respectable baronet that I am not the enemy of the agriculturalist; I am his best friend. My mining operations, which I describe, are as beneficial to his land as an extra pair of ploughs and harrows. My ancestors, with their shafts and adits and tunnels and drives, were the scientific pioneers of the agricultural world, in the days before draining-tires were dreamt of. Many a piece of wet, boggy, useless soil has the Burrows family converted into sound, firm, arable land. Explain this to Sir Robert in your lucid and convincing manner, charming Lady Flora, and then, perhaps, he will instruct his subordinates, Farmer Sibley to wit, and Gamekeeper Bagges, to desist from the cruel and iniquitous practice of taxing myself and my relatives as subjects. The Burrows family ought to be held in honour by farmers, instead of which we are literally gibbeted like vermin. Will you undertake to put the matter properly before Sir Robert? I have heard that he is a gentleman of amiable disposition, and I am sure, if he has any real sense, he would not wish that a family as ancient and respectable as his own should be so shamefully treated. You will do this favour for us, Lady Flora?"

"I promise you that I will use all the eloquence I possess."

"Very well, then I will give you the address of a medical adviser who I can recommend, not that I have much esteem for doctors. In my belief there is nothing for health like contact with our mother-earth, from which we all sprang, and to which we must all ultimately go. Try a week in the mines, Lady Flora. Surround yourself, head, body, and limbs, with your mother-earth, and take my word for it, in a few days you will be, by use the common saying, 'as right as a trivet.'"

"I should be stifled and blinded."

"Am I stifled and blinded?" demanded little Mr. Burrows rather angrily. "Oh, dear! I see what it is, Lady F. You are afraid of hurting those eyes of yours, which, you say, are so sensitive and so beautiful, but which in my opinion—you will, I hope, excuse my plain-speaking—are most absurdly and unnecessarily big. For really useful eyes the Burrows family may be taken as a model. But I perceive that I am digressing, and that they are becoming impatient. You want the address of my medical friend? You shall have it."

And with these words Mr. Burrows drew a pocket-book from the breast-pocket of his black velvet coat, took a card from it, and pencilled the following:—

"DR. RENNARD, M.R.C.S.,

"THE FURZE BUSHES,

"PIDGLEY COMMON.

"With Mr. Mordaunt Burrows' compliments, introducing Lady Flora Waggitt."

"What does 'M.R.C.S.' mean, Mr. Burrows?"

"It means Member of the Royal College of Surgeons. Now you can't mistake the way, if you keep that row of poplars just a little to the left. And if you start at once, you will be pretty sure to find Dr. Rennard at home. He generally comes home to lunch. I beg to salute your ladyship. And with a polite little bob of his head, Mr. Burrows vanished. That is, apparently. Of course, he had not really vanished; he had only gone, very swiftly and silently and adroitly, down into his mine."

V.

LADY FLORA was about to begin her journey, when she was startled by the sound over her head of a harsh female voice, which said,—

"What does 'M.R.C.S.' indeed! Does your ladyship know what that means?"

She looked up, and on the main branch of an old oak tree she saw sitting the greatest chatterer and gossip in all Basildon, to wit, Mrs. Margaret Pye, commonly known as Mag Vicky.

"What does it mean, ma'am?" asked Lady Flora, very stiffly, for she had no liking for Mrs. Pye.

"It means Midnight Kobber, Cunning Scamp. Little Burrows gets a percentage on all the patients he sends to Rennard. I wish you joy of your medical adviser. Good-bye." And so saying, Mrs. Pye, with a rustle of her black-and-white dress, nimbly quitted the oak tree, and in a few seconds was a mere speck in the distance.

"Oh, dear! oh, dear!" sighed Lady Flora, "how difficult it is in this world to know what to believe! However, I don't believe Mr. Mag, she never has a good word to say of any one. So I shall console Dr. Rennard in spite of her, for he cannot make me feel more unwell than I feel at this moment."

Twenty minutes later she arrived in front of the Doctor's professional residence. The entrance was modestly hidden from the view of casual wayfarers by a luxuriant growth of bushy shrubs. Over the doorway hung a board bearing the following inscription:—

"DR. RENNARD, CONSULTING SURGEON.

"Teeth extracted painlessly. Advice gratis before 10 A.M."

It may be worth while to peep within, while Lady Flora is waiting outside the door for an answer to her rather timid knock.

The Doctor, Mrs. Rennard, and their children were all assembled round the table, busily engaged in eating. How horrified the five Mrs. Coxes would have been if they could have read the *menu* of the repast! For the principal dish on the festive board was the body of their lamented lord and master, Chanty Cleer Cox, Esq. I

By this time there was very little of him remaining. His bones were nearly picked clean. It was only luncheon for the Doctor and Mrs. Rennard; but it was dinner for the youngsters, and they all had excellent appetites.

"Well, my love," observed the Doctor, throwing himself luxuriously back in his chair, "I don't know when I have enjoyed a luncheon more thoroughly. This species of animal nutriment," pointing to the defunct Mr. Cox's backbone, "is always appetising, but an added relish is given to the repast when you knew the party during life. Dear, dear," continued the worthy Doctor, with a sigh, "how often have I watched our departed friend—with anxious eyes I must admit—strutting consequentially about the stable-yard, and when the sunlight had faded away in the west, summoning his wives to their bed chamber. Poor fellow! He was very good—very good, indeed, especially in the region of the breast—Now then," he suddenly exclaimed in a peevish tone, "what are you urchins quarrelling about?"

For two of the young Rennards were snarling at each other in a very vicious manner.

"Pa said I was to have the merrythought."

"Ma said I was to have it."

"You are both to have it, my darlings," said their mother. "Now you must each wish a wish, then you must each hold a side of the merrythought and pull it in two. Whoever gets the biggest half will have his wish."

"Hurrah! I've got the biggest half! I've won," cried the elden of the two.

"What did you wish for, Volpene?" asked Mrs. Rennard.

"A night and a day, a dark room, a dark door, a dark door."

"My dear!" exclaimed Dr. Rennard, hastily, "this child is becoming horribly precocious—And what did you wish for?" he added, turning to the other young hopeful.

"Wished I was big enough to go out with you at night, catching—"

"Ha! ha!" interrupted the Doctor, "catching parties—yes—yes—very good, it'll come, my boy, in due time. My dear Vicky," he whispered to his wife, "these children are getting to know too much."

"What does it signify? They must know everything before long," replied Mrs. Rennard, who called herself Victoria, but who, according to Mrs. Mag Pye, had been christened Vixen. "There's nothing to be ashamed of in the business, is there?"

"Not in the abstract, my love. Still, public opinion—"

"You mean the opinion of such folks as the Cox family? I don't think much of the opinion of fellows who have half-a-dozen wives," said Mrs. Rennard, severely.

"Polygamy may be wrong, my love, but it's pleasant."

"Dr. Rennard! what do you mean?" exclaimed his helpmate, with an indignant air.

"I don't mean pleasant in that sense, Vicky. The Rennards are, of course, and always will be, strict monogamists. I mean pleasant in the sense that it tends to increase the Cox population, and therefore adds to our little clan comforts."

"Oh, dear! that sense, Doctor, I quite agree with you," said Mrs. Rennard, smiling, and showing a very white set of teeth.

"Hush!" cried the Doctor. "There's a knock at the door."

"It's only the *Daily Telegraph*, father. Here it is, shored under the mat," answered his son and heir.

"Perhaps you are to look over to-day's hunting appointments. Tat-tat! What is this?" Sir Cropper-Balfin's hound, Pigdley Common, 11.30. A most barbarous and cowardly pastime. I fully agree with the historian Freeman that—"

"Perhaps you're another side to the question," said Mrs. Rennard.

"If there was no hunting, any farmer might shoot a—"

"Yes, my dear Vicky, quite right, you're quite right. Still, it's a choice of evils. Heigho! this is a miserable world. Anxiety makes me feel hungry again. Alas! not a particle more to be got out of the Coxes. Rush again! I dare say there was a knock at the door. Go on, see who it is, Volpene."

Whereupon Volpene went to the door, and after some parley admitted Lady Flora Waggitt.

Considering that he was a medical practitioner, who ought to have been pleased to see a patient, Dr. Rennard, at first, strangely so, and suspicious manner. Apparently his nerves were upset by something he had seen in the newspaper. But so soon as he understood the cause of Lady Flora's visit, and perceived that she was really suffering, his natural plausibility and fluency of speech returned to him.

"Allow me to conduct your ladyship into the surgery," he said. And he preceded her thither with a dignified air, carrying a stethoscope with him.

After a few routine questions, and the usual examination of the pulse, Dr. Rennard said: "It must appear a rude question to ask a lady, but have you indulged much lately in the pleasures of the table?"

"I think not. Stay, perhaps I have. Sir Robert had a dinner-party the night before last, and perhaps—"

"Perhaps you ate too much fricasseed chicken, my lady."

"That was the very dish. I remember all now, Doctor; you must be a wizard," said Lady Flora, enthusiastically.

"No, my dear madam; my supposed magical powers are merely due to accurate scientific observation. Your complexion and the hypochondriacal condition of your nose at once suggested fricasseed chicken. A fascinating but fatal food." ("I wish I had that dish here now," he said to himself. "On the night of the dinner-party I saw it carried into the pantry, and it made my mouth water.")

"And now, dear Doctor," said Lady Flora, for his cleverness about the chicken had quite fascinated her, "Can you give me anything that will do me good?"

"Can I? If I could not, I should be unworthy of the honourable appendage M.R.C.S., which is attached to my name. The digestive organs, owing to that noxious nutriment—chicken—are temporarily deranged, but they can easily be set right again."

"How?"

"By a course of Rennard's Golden Elixir, price 2s. 6d. per bottle. A considerable saving is effected by taking the 11s. bottles, which are equal in size to five of the smaller. I beg your ladyship's pardon. I was unintentionally quoting my advertisement."

Just then Mrs. Rennard put her head in at the door. Her features were an expression of alarm.

"Sorry to interrupt, but I must speak to you for a moment, hubby."

"Excuse me half a minute, Lady Flora," said the Doctor. "Some domestic detail. Careful wives will ask our advice even about pies and puddings, ha! ha!"

"Now, Vicky, what is it?" he whispered in a sharp, quick, anxious tone, as soon as he was outside the door.

The Doctor was probably interested in some chemical investigations, for his wife in her whisperer pretty mentioned the word "earths."

"They're all stopped," she said. "Every one of them. It was done before daylight. Captain Horkey's been found and looked."

"And the meet is on at Pidgley Common, as the paper reports."

"Yes. Horkey saw the pink coats and riding-habits assembling



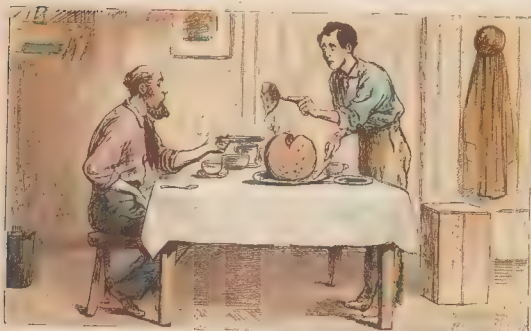
BARTERING FOR THE CHRISTMAS DINNER



CHRISTMAS MORNING—HOISTING THE BRITISH FLAG



MAKING THE PUDDING



IT TURNED OUT RATHER RAW



AND INDIGESTIBLE



A HALF-BREED BALL



LIFE, FORTUNE, AND HAPPINESS.

"Nor love thy life, nor hate; but what thou livest
Live well."—MILTON.

"Suppose it were perfectly certain that the life and fortune of every one of us would, one day or other, depend upon our winning or losing a game at chess. Don't you think that we should all consider it to be a primary duty to LEARN AT LEAST the names and moves of the pieces; to have a notion of a gambit, and a keen eye for all the means of giving and getting out of check? Do you not think we should look with a disapprobation amounting to scorn upon the father who allowed his sons, or the State that allowed its members, to grow up without knowing a pawn from a knight? Yet it is a very plain and elementary truth, that the life, the fortune, and the happiness of every one of us—and, more or less, of those who are connected with us—do depend upon our knowing something of the rules of a game infinitely more difficult and complicated than chess. It is a game which has been played for untold ages, every man and woman of us being one of the two players in a game of his or her own. The chess-board is the world, the pieces are the phenomena of the universe, the rules of the game are WHAT WE CALL THE LAWS OF NATURE. The player on the other side is hidden from us. We know his play is always FAIR, JUST, and PATIENT. But also we know, TO OUR COST, THAT HE NEVER OVERLOOKS A MISTAKE, or makes the smallest ALLOWANCE FOR IGNORANCE. To the man who plays well



the highest stakes are paid, with that sort of overflowing generosity with which the strong shows delight in strength. But he who plays ill is checkmated—WITHOUT HASTE, BUT WITHOUT REMORSE.—HUXLEY.

NOT THOUSANDS,
BUT MILLIONS

Have died from preventable diseases in this country. It is the duty of every one to prevent this; for the means, read a large Illustrated Sheet given with each Bottle of ENO'S FRUIT SALT (prepared from sound, ripe fruit). The Fruit-Salt is health-giving and refreshing, and the best preventative and cure for Bilious Headaches and all Stomach Disorders. It allays and cures fevers and nervous excitement, prevents diarrhoea and depression, and removes effete, gouty, rheumatic, or any form of blood poison; or in a few words, is positively essential to the healthy action of the animal economy. If its true or great value in keeping the body in health were universally known, no family or traveller would feel safe without it. Disease is

A GREAT BARRIER TO ALL
PROGRESS.

"I used my Fruit Salt FREELY in my last attack of fever, and have every reason to think it saved my life."—J. C. ENO.

THE HUGE BLUNDER. WHO IS TO BLAME?

THE LATE LORD BEACONSFIELD

uttered noble sentiments when he said, "The health of the people is really the foundation upon which all their happiness and power as a State depend." This age, in many points great and intelligent, spends large sums of money in legal strangling of those who cause their fellows violent death. The result of ignorance and a want of control over their passions, while we calmly allow millions to die of, and hundreds of millions to suffer from, various preventable diseases, simply for want of a better Sanitary Tribunal.

THE ARMY.

ACCIDENTAL INDIGESTION.—Before and after the Christmas Pudding take ENO'S FRUIT SALT.

THE ART OF CONQUEST IS LOST WITHOUT THE ART OF EATING.—A gentleman writes:—"When I feel out of spirits I take a dose of ENO'S FRUIT SALT one hour before dinner; the effect is all I could wish." How to enjoy good food, that would otherwise cause Biliousness, Headache, or Disordered Stomach, use ENO'S FRUIT SALT.

THE FESTIVE SEASON.—HOW TO ENJOY GOOD FOOD which otherwise disorders the digestive organs, causing indigestion, headache, and inactive blood, use ENO'S FRUIT SALT. Also as a refreshing, relaxing, invigorating beverage use ENO'S FRUIT SALT. It is the best preventative and cure for Biliousness, Sick Headache, Eruptions, Impure Blood, Pimples, eruptions, Chills, Giddiness, Mental Depression, Want of Appetite, Sourness of the Stomach, Constipation, Vomiting, Thirst, &c., and to remove the effects of Errors of Eating and Drinking.

"HEALTH IS THE GREATEST OF ALL POSSESSIONS."—Before and after the Christmas Pudding take ENO'S FRUIT SALT. It is a pleasant beverage, both cooling, refreshing, and invigorating.

THE NURSERY. BRAIN FOOD IN CHILDHOOD—SLEEP. HEALTH IN CHILDHOOD—FRESH AIR AND ENO'S FRUIT SALT.

IMPORTANT TO PARENTS.—Should a parent have nothing to bestow on a child but a narrow education, still he will bless you if you form his body to health, and strength, and activity, whether he earn his simple meal by labour at the plough, anvil, or axe. On the contrary, if you NEGLECT his health and strength, and leave him a debilitated wretch, he would curse you, though a millionaire.

ENO'S FRUIT SALT is an INDISPENSABLE REQUISITE in the preservation of CHILDREN'S HEALTH.



DON'T GO FROM HOME WITHOUT A BOTTLE OF ENO'S FRUIT SALT.—Although hardly coming within the scope of the present article, it may not be out of place to draw attention to a preparation which for the time it has been introduced to the public has come more rapidly to the front, and purely on its merits, than anything of the kind we have previously seen. We allude to ENO'S FRUIT SALT. We have now arrived at a period of the year when there is a natural craving for salts and saline mixtures. We live in a fast age, and many who cannot be accused of being temperate in anything, are from the nature of the occupation, or from the necessities of the position they fill, compelled to live at a pace which requires that the utmost care should be taken by them of their health generally, and the best remedies constantly made use of. We know it is not the miles we travel, but the pace that kills. A daily draught of this 'Salt' from our own knowledge, having seen its beneficial results, is peculiarly adapted to counteract the injurious effects of late hours, unnatural exertion, or overeating, and the breathing of impure air. We have special qualities, which make it valuable at all times, it will be found to be a grateful just at this season, especially as it does those constituents for which the system craves.—The Civil Service Gazette, June 4, 1881.

INJUDICIOUS DIET.—As a gentle laxative or tonic it is pleasant to the taste, and much superior to nauseous drugs. It corrects the effects of late hours, overeating, or exhaustion, and is extremely beneficial in any feverishness or heat of the skin. Unlike other salines, instead of lowering the system it invigorates it. The FRUIT SALT ought to be kept in every NURSERY, not only for use as a HEALTH-GIVING, PLEASANT COOLING, REFRESHING, and INVIGORATING BEVERAGE, but also as a convenient and valuable remedial agent in COLDS, FEVERISHNESS, PLEURISY, INFLAMMATORY DISTURBANCES, &c. Many fevers and other inflammatory diseases would be drawn off or greatly modified if the FRUIT SALT and a blanket bath were used at the outset. In disorders of the stomach, if impure blood it is invaluable, for not the least of its recommendations is its resemblance to fruit in the NATURAL way in which it relieves the system of effete matter, which, if retained, poisons the blood. Its advantage over fruit is that it can be always at hand when required; at the same time, it is in every respect as harmless as the juices of ripe fruit from which it has been obtained.

PARTED AT CHRISTMAS.

WHAT MAKES A HAPPY CHRISTMAS? Health, and the things we love, and those who love us.

STIMULANTS, LATE HOURS, INDOOR EXERCISE.—It ought to be kept in every bedroom, in readiness for any emergency; for under any circumstances, its use is beneficial, and never can do harm.

THE DIET GENERALLY SUITABLE TO THE DYSPEPTIC is that which combines most nutriment with least bulk—raw native oysters (cleared) with fresh lemon-juice—they enrich the blood with the least effort.

USE ENO'S FRUIT SALT, prepared from sound ripe fruit. "What every travelling trunk and household in the world ought to contain—a bottle of ENO'S FRUIT SALT. Without such a simple preparation, the security of life is immensely increased." All our customers for Eno's Salt would not be without it upon any consideration, they have realised so much benefit from it.—Wagon Bootmakers, Chemists, Jersey.

ALSO REMOVES GOUTY OR RHEUMATIC POISONS from the blood, the neglect of which often results in apoplexy, heart disease, and sudden death.

CAUTION.—LEGAL RIGHTS ARE PROTECTED IN EVERY CIVILISED COUNTRY.

Examine each Bottle, and see the Capsule is marked "ENO'S FRUIT SALT." Without it you have been imposed on by Worthless Imitations.

Directions in Sixteen Languages How to Prevent Disease.

Prepared only at ENO'S FRUIT SALT WORKS, HATCHAM, LONDON, S.E., by J. C. ENO'S PATENT.

IMPORTANT TO ALL.—"Sir—Having travelled a great deal in my life, and having suffered a great deal from 'Poisoned Blood' and Want of Appetite, I was induced by a friend to use your wonderful FRUIT SALT. I was immediately relieved, and am now hale and hearty. I shall never be without a bottle again on my travels. I am too pleased to repay you in some way for your wonderful invention by giving you full use of my testimony to the above. Sir, I am your grateful."

"Dr. G. HANSON, M.A."

"Clifton Down Hotel, Gloucestershire,"

"Near Bristol, February, 1881."

TO EUROPEANS who propose VISITING HOT CLIMATES, ENO'S FRUIT SALT is absolutely necessary to the preservation of health.

SUCCESS IN LIFE.—"A new invention brought before the public and commands a large score of admirable imitations are immediately introduced by the unscrupulous, who, in copying the original closely enough to deceive the public, and yet not to pay the infringe upon legal rights, exercise an ingenuity that 'improves' in an original channel, could not fail to secure reputation and profit."—Adams.

Sold by all Chemists, price 2s. 6d. and 4s. 6d. Protection in every Country.



WE HATE THE DOWNY SOFT—OUR FISH IS FRIGID



STIRRING THE PUDDING IS HALF THE BATTLE



THE PUDDING IS BROUGHT IN—THE FIRE A GREAT SUCCESS



AS THE FISH WAS BROUGHT IN—THE PUDDING WAS DISCOVERED HANGING OUTSIDE THE KITCHEN WALL



HALF-AN-HOUR BEFORE DINNER THE PUDDING WAS DISCOVERED HANGING OUTSIDE THE KITCHEN WALL



GOING TO THE CHRISTMAS DINNER



"FRUIT FROM THE CHRISTMAS TREE"—A SKETCH AT THE FOUNDLING HOSPITAL, GUILDFORD STREET

FROM THE PICTURE BY ARTHUR HOPKINS

"Why are you out here on such a night? Can I do anything to help you?" said Ellen tremulously.

"I am tired. I want to get away—to hide—to rest," was the answer, given in a voice of the most thrilling pathos.

"Have you come far?" asked Ellen. "Where did you live?"

"Live! I live nowhere. I am dead. Have they not told you? I died on that dreadful night. Oh! God! The flames—how they hissed! Hide me! Hide me!" The voice had risen to a shriek; it dropped suddenly into a soft, pathetic monotone. "I am looking for a grave," she murmured. "I told him I hated the dark, and he said it should be light there. I want to have light in my grave." As if unconscious of Ellen's presence, she turned her eyes upwards again towards the light from the window.

Ellen's teeth chattered with cold and nervousness. What was she to do? Beyond a doubt this was a poor distraught creature who had escaped from her attendants. It might be dangerous to take her in. But to leave her out there would be death. It took Ellen a moment only to form her resolution. Laying her hand upon the stranger's arm, she drew her with gentle force towards the window of the dining-hall.

"Come to the light," she said soothingly. "You can rest here. I will hide you. Yes," as the lady shrank from her touch; "you need not be afraid of me. Come."

"Will you take me there?" said the stranger, pointing to the lights.

"Yes; that is my room. Good heavens! how cold your hands are. You might be dead. Come in; come quickly."

Then her guiding touch was followed, and presently they two were by the bright wood-fire, and Ellen in her tender ministrations forgot her superstitious fears. Her strange guest was gentler than a child. It was impossible to fear her. She accepted Ellen's attention in a touchingly passive way, and now, and then, she gave utterance to words which, as she uttered them, she seemed to have with little apparent significance or sequence; but she was perfectly calm now. One might have fancied she had found the refuge for which she had long been seeking.

And meanwhile the Old Year told itself out, the New Year came into being. "A stillness, a beginning for my year," said Ellen, as the first stroke of twelve tolled out from the deep-voiced clock in the hall; she was busy at the moment, stirring some milk which she had fetched from the kitchen in a little tin sauceman on the fire, for she was sure her guest must be famished. "But perhaps it is not a bad beginning," she added.

Before the first hour of the year had run its course the White Lady was in Ellen's bed, sleeping as peacefully as if Hillbury Manor House had been her home for years.

"Ah! yes; just so I found her outside, you say. Could give no account of herself. Very strange!" So said Lady Montague's family physician, a person of some eminence, in one pair of eyes at least, who was called in on the following day to see the stranger.

"It was my daughter, Ellen, who took her in," said Lady Montague. "The dear child has nerves of iron. Tender-hearted as I am I could no more have done it than flown. Her account made my blood run cold literally."

"I have always taken Miss Ellen for a brave girl. Well, your ladyship, I am glad you look at it so. A good thing for the poor devoted creature that she has fallen amongst amiable folks. Many a person would have sent her to the infirmary straight."

"Doctor, you make me shiver. The infirmary for a girl like that?"

"A homeless, friendless, poor, and possibly mad woman, who has forced herself upon you."

Lady Montague turned and looked at her doctor. She was a lady who had once been exceedingly pretty; she had small aristocratic features, and the softest of brown eyes, which, however, at this moment were slight with indignation. "Say at once that we had better turn this unfortunate young lady out of doors," she said, "and, in that case, I will consult another doctor about her."

"Oh, if you take it in that way—"

"I do take it in that way. Possibly I am foolish. You, no doubt, will call me superstitious; but I seem to feel that I have thrown this poor thing at our gates, and that if we refuse to accept the charge of her we incur a serious responsibility. I am surprised, besides, that a man of your experience should put down a patient as hopelessly insane after so cursory an examination. I believe—but perhaps it is useless to say what I believe until I know how you intend to act."

The Doctor smiled and bowed. He was a tall, gaunt, grim-looking man. Lady Montague, to whom strong feeling had given unusually fluent speech, and who, now that she had spoken, felt a little alarmed at her own tenacity, was relieved to find that her indignant words had not offended him, that, in fact, he wore an expression which the patients who loved him best (and this grim-looking person was not without adoring worshippers) liked to see on his face.

"I spoke as a friend just now," he observed. "I may count myself amongst the number of your friends, Lady Montague."

"How can you ask the question, Dr. Griffith? I have no truer friend in the world than you." She held out her hand; her brown eyes were soft again. She was sorry she had been so hasty.

"And I hope I shall always merit that description," he said, bowing low, in a quaint old-world fashion, over her outstretched hand. "I wished you seriously to consider what you are doing," he proceeded; "since you have considered, there is no more to be said on that head. I speak to you now as a doctor, professionally."

"Stay, let me fetch paper and pencil. I have not a good memory," said Lady Montague.

"I think you will be able to remember my directions. They need not be elaborate. At this moment all I have to say is, let her sleep."

"But he has slept so long. It frightens us. When will she be likely to awake?"

"Don't be frightened if I tell you at once that this is not an ordinary sleep; it is a trance. It may last for some hours longer. With your permission I will remain in the house for those hours. In my opinion she is fresh from an attack of brain-fever, resulting probably from severe mental and physical strain. I think it likely that when she awakes you will find her memory gone. I hope so. That will be a great help to her recovery."

"And what are we to do in such case?"

"Treat her as if she were really the child which, in intellect, you will most probably find her; strengthen her body in every possible way; try to direct her mind; keep off as long as possible any reference to her past life. For present purposes it will be sufficient to allow her to believe that, when she opens her eyes presently in Miss Ellen's room, she opens them in a new world. It was a pretty idea, by the bye, to have flowers about. As many of them as you like. You have some musical friends, have you not?"

"There is Juan, the Clintons' protégé. He plays the violin, you know."

"Ah! yes. Your little admirer. If he could be got to play something soft in the ante-room—"

"Doctor," cried Lady Montague laughing, "never you profess to be a hard-hearted cynic again. It is not your rôle. I believe you have been all this time hiding your gits. You are a poet."

"Oh! your ladyship; there's a certain force in associations, you know."

The door opened to admit Ellen Montague. She was walking slowly, like one in a dream.

"And how is our patient now?" asked the Doctor briskly.

"She has not stirred. She is so white, so placid, I am afraid, Dr. Griffith, you are so clever; save her if you can."

"I tell you what I shall do, Miss Ellen," replied the doctor. "I shall forbid you to go into her room for the present. You are becoming overwrought. Come, come, it is no use protesting. I have not physicked you from your babyhood without understanding you a little. Lady Montague, with your permission I will take Miss Ellen up to your Anne presently with a handful of biscuits, and perhaps you could manage to have my horse put up, and—yes, let my man go to the Clintons, and bring Juan back."

He went towards the door, Ellen following him. He turned. "If my orders are not strictly followed," he protested, "I leave the house at once. There is a bell in your room, Miss Ellen. Yes? When I want you to go I will ring that bell. Until I do, let no one come up but Anne."

"And how about Juan?" asked Lady Montague.

"He may scrape his fiddle in the dining-hall, if he likes, leaving the door open."

To a chorus of intense anxiety passed away. By that time the young Juan had arrived, and, stationed in the room adjoining Ellen Montague's, was playing some of his sweet dream music on the violin. The Doctor and old Anne were with the sleeper; more flowers had been sent up—roses and lilies from the winter garden, sprays of white lilac and fragrant carnations. Lady Montague and her daughter waited in the garden-parlour below, while the light of the short winter afternoon waned slowly. Twice Ellen had said to her mother, "I cannot bear this suspense;" twice Lady Montague had urged her urgently that Dr. Griffith was a man who would not allow his wishes to be disobeyed. "He would be capable of leaving the house," she said. "Then, at last, when their suspense was at its height, the little bell tinkled, and Ellen, with a beating heart, ran upstairs to her room."

Yet how strange a life! There was the stately form she had seen on New Year's morning, and the fine chivalric face, and the stream of golden hair; but the horror in the face had gone; its lips were parted in a smile; its eyes looked out with dreamy wonder; its fair, smooth brow was unclouded by sorrow.

As Ellen advanced her step, keeping time with the music which came in melodious gusts from the adjoining room, the White Lady lifted her head from the pillow and gazed at her steadily, like a young child in view of something strange but not unpleasant. Ellen smiled; her smile was immediately reflected. "Ah!" said the young girl, "I am glad to see you better."

Her visitor continued to gaze and smile.

"What have become of the Doctor and Anne?" she asked; but received no answer. She became perplexed, fearing the beautiful creature might be dumb, and then, remembering to have heard her speak on the previous evening, she looked round for the Doctor to solve her perplexities. He increased them immensely. She had discovered him behind the window curtains; but, instead of obeying her vigorous signs, he set himself to creep out of the room, in such a way as to be neither seen nor heard by her visitor. But old Anne was at Ellen's elbow with a bowl of strong soup.

"The young lady is to take this at once, Miss," she said.

II.

FROM the moment when she awoke from her long sleep perfect health seemed to return to the lady who had fallen in so strange a way into the hands of Lady Montague and her daughter. But in the loved woman's mind a small cloud of a little child seemed to dwell, and this was what puzzled them.

During the first few days she was with them, Dr. Griffith came and went; but he would not see her. He listened to all they had to say, gave his advice, and went away. When Lady Montague asked him why he would not see her, he replied that he was afraid he might alarm her. "I want her to see only pleasant things at first," he said; "see cheerful faces, hear charming sounds."

Whereupon Lady Montague accused him once more of being a Jew.

Meanwhile their strange and lovely visitor, who had at first seemed incapable even of connected speech, was learning rapidly. "Say what you like," said Ellen to Dr. Griffith on one of his visits. "I am certain she has intelligence of a high order."

"She never forgets anything that I say to her," said Lady Montague. "It is really pathetic to see the efforts she makes to please us. As she appears not even to remember her own name, we have given her the name of Theodora, and she answers to it; she seems to like the sound of it. I suppose we shall find out her right name some day."

The Doctor approved the choice of name. "She seems like a protégé of mine as well as yours," he said. "But where is she now?"

"They brought him to the window of the garden parlour, and pointed her out moving to and fro among the plants in a glass-house near at hand."

"She is still dressed in white," observed the Doctor, watching her with attentive scrutiny.

"Yes," said Ellen. "We tried her with a coloured dress of mammoth, but she appeared uneasy, so we gave her back her own, which, after all, suits her best, and I am having other dresses made after the same fashion. It is cut like those Greek dresses that the æsthetic people are raving about in London just now; and, do you know that her belt is worth a mint of money? It is studded with jewels."

"Initiations, most likely," said the Doctor, and unheeding Ellen's indignant protest—"What is more important," he said, turning to Lady Montague, "is our patient's state of mind. Do you think she is satisfied still? Has she begun to ask questions?"

"She never asks any question," replied Lady Montague. "Her vocabulary, you know, is not very large yet. But I think she begins to be perplexed."

"I will see and speak to her the next time I come," said Dr. Griffith, taking his leave hurriedly.

Theodora was no longer to be seen in the glass-house. She had probably entered the long covered passage, which connected it with the garden parlour. Many weeks elapsed before the Doctor's next time of coming. He wrote to Lady Montague in the interval. He was overwhelmed with work. His patients had chosen to fall ill in a batch. Should there be any urgent necessity for his presence at Hillbury, he would make a point of going there, if not, he trusted Lady Montague would excuse him.

Then came news that his work had been too heavy for him; he was breaking down. Since the worst cases were in a fair way to recovery, and his assistants were not yet sufficiently trained to be sent up to London to recruit himself with a little music and art. On his return he would make it his first business to call upon Lady

Montague, and see for himself what she and Miss Ellen had made of the White Lady of Hillbury; for this he informed them was the name their guest bore in the neighbourhood. This latter fact was known at Hillbury, and had given some little annoyance to its inmates.

Lady Montague, who was quiet, retiring, and eminently correct in all her ideas—ideas which had been a part of her heritage—could not bear the thought that, from any cause whatsoever, she or hers should be a topic of conversation to their neighbours. And for some time she had tried to hide the fact, that the guest whose beauty and strangeness made her necessarily a subject of remark had come to them in so mysterious a manner. But such things cannot be hidden. The story, with many an embellishment, was soon passed abroad, and Lady Montague was put to the ordeal of hearing from particular friends what friends, who were not so particular, had been pleased to say on the subject.

"There are some who will have it that the poor thing escaped from a mad-house," said one lady in the course of an afternoon-call, prolonged almost past endurance.

"Oh! but that's not the strangest thing that is said," put in another visitor. "Think of Miss Winthrop saying she was a relative of yours—a sister, whom you had believed to be dead, come to life again. I said it was absurd at the time."

"Well," said the first speaker, gathering her facts about her, she had been lingering in the hope of seeing the "White Lady," and judging her for herself,—no one can say now that you are not a miracle of goodness, dear Lady Montague."

A miracle is easily coined in our neighbourhood," Lady Montague said in a low, sweet voice.

All this grated upon her; but she had a certain compensation in the delight of watching her strange guest, and in the admiration and interest she experienced as, day by day, some touching beauty of character, some rarely delicate perception, or some acquisition of knowledge, as if by magic, proved that the being they had saved and befriended was, from every point of view, worthy of their love and care.

From the very first the young lady had shown herself strongly attracted by Lady Montague. As the days and weeks went by her devotion to the mistress of the house increased. It was very touching. She watched Lady Montague moving about the house, working, talking, or writing, with a wistful, eager love, which was in keeping with her childlike nature. In the garden-parlour, as at afternoon or evening they sat together, she would place herself where she could command a view of Lady Montague, and she would spend long periods in studying her face. Soon she learned to perform little thoughtful services for her friend, to anticipate her wants, to read to her, to thread her needles, and arrange her flowers. "Of Ellen she showed herself fond in a calm sisterly fashion. Lady Montague she seemed to reverence as well as adore."

Of course this homage was not displeasing to its object.

"I am glad the dear child likes me," the gentle lady would say, "it is so much easier to carry on her education." The education had already reached that point when it was impossible to hide from Theodora the knowledge that this calm presence, with its even-flowing days, was not the whole of her life.

She loved wandering alone in Hillbury Park; and she manifested a special affection for the grand old beech wood which made it famous. Certain persons, who were curious to meet her, found out her tastes, and Theodora was interviewed, first by Miss Verulam, the gossip-monger of the neighbourhood, and secondly by Mr. Protheroe, the new curate.

The lady asked her some perplexing questions; the gentleman (he was acting from conscientious motives) drew her out, and being shocked and surprised, and finding her answers to be less and less than a beautiful pagan, he took upon himself to enlighten her.

On her return from that memorable stroll, Theodora electrified her teachers by saying, "No human being is isolated. Is that true?" Lady Montague assented.

"Then I have responsibilities," replied the girl. "What are they?"

"For the present moment to learn, I think," said Lady Montague, smiling.

"For the present moment," echoed Theodora. "But I have a past. Everybody has a past."

"Can you remember anything out of the past, dear?"

"I don't know. I have dreams sometimes. I see a face like yours."

"Like mine? But then it is a dream of the present, not of the past, dear."

"Do you think I shall ever remember?" Theodora asked, wistfully.

"Of course you will, dear. In the mean time do not trouble your head."

"I am sure your face is in my past," the girl persisted. "Did you never see me before the day I came to you? Think; you may have forgotten."

"No one could see your face and forget it, darling," said Lady Montague.

This conversation took place in late spring, when Theodora had been about five months at Hillbury. It made Lady Montague uneasy, and she was very glad, on the following day, in the afternoon, to see Dr. Griffith's carriage driving up the avenue. Leaving Ellen with Theodora in the garden parlour, she went out into the hall to meet him.

"I should like you to see your patient," she said.

"Why?" he asked. "Does not the improvement continue?"

"She is very well, most amiable, perfectly intelligent."

"And you are not satisfied?"

"Yes, so far as that goes. But she has a perplexed expression. She begins to ask questions."

"Ah!" he looked grave. "We must stave that off a little longer. I want her kept quiet."

"So do I. I am afraid some busybody has been talking to her."

"Unfortunately, we can't shut out the busybody; he is as penetrating as dust in March. Lady Montague, with your permission I will see your guest. It's my opinion she has already seen uglier mortals than I am."

From that time Dr. Griffith's visits again became frequent. Theodora took to him, not in the same enthusiastic manner as to Lady Montague, but showing a quiet, almost filial confidence, which gratified him extremely. So far as her physical and mental health were concerned, this feeling was useful, for Dr. Griffith was able to do what had been possible neither to Lady Montague nor Ellen. He set her at rest, accomplishing the feat by a very simple process.

"You shall know everything some day," he would say. "And, believe me, in time enough."

Then she would fix her dark eyes, which had again begun to look mournful, upon him. "Do you promise me that?" she would ask, and upon his answering, "Yes, I promise," the expression of child-like confidence and gladness would return to her face.

But soon after this—the summer had now completely run its course—Theodora became sad from another cause. She read trouble in the faces of Lady Montague and Ellen. They did not speak to her of their sorrow, and it was probable that she distressed them by her own. One morning, at the breakfast table, when the post-bag had just been opened, and its contents distributed, she saw tears in Lady Montague's eyes.

Theodora was becoming perfectly womanly now, in all but the persistent failure of memory, so that at moments she was almost as heartily as full, she said nothing. In the evening she drew her low chair

to Lady Montague's side, and said, "Why don't you send for Dr. Griffith?"

"Should you like to see him, dear?" asked her friend.

"No; but I should like him to see you. He is very good when people are in trouble."

"In trouble, Theodora!"

"You are in trouble, Mairaine" (she had been taught to give Lady Montague this pretty French title). "You have not told me, but I know, and Dr. Griffith is a wise man."

"So he is, and he used to take a great interest in Harry. Ellen, I really think Theodora's idea is a good one. I will ask the Doctor what I ought to do about my boy."

Lady Montague's note found the Doctor at home. It was a piteous little note. "I am in deep anxiety," she wrote. "For six months my boy has not written to me. At first I believed it to be only carelessness on his part. I am convinced now that something is wrong. He is ill, dying, perhaps, in some out-of-the-way place. I would trace him, but you are a man, and a wise man, Doctor. Tell me what steps I should take."

It is said to be compelled, as an historian, to relate that Dr. Griffith, when he read this heart-rending note, smiled grimly. It reached him about his dinner hour. He sent out word that, after he had dined, his horse should be brought round, and at about nine o'clock that same evening he drew rein under the terrace of Hillbury. Looking up he saw the White Lady standing there, and greeted her with a grave salute. She scarcely noticed him.

The Doctor went in, and found Ellen Montague and her mother in their ordinary sitting room. He set their minds at rest, acting in somewhat the same fashion as he had done by Theodora. It was curious how this man always inspired confidence. "I happen to know where Sir Henry is," he said. "He is not ill—not in body, that is to say; but he is in rather a peculiar state of mind just now."

Lady Montague's eyes were wide open. "You looked angry. 'No state of mind can be any excuse for his conduct,' she said, 'giving poor mamma all this anxiety!'"

"Pardon me, my dear Miss Ellen," replied the Doctor, temperately; "your indignation does you honour; but just now, it is somewhat unbecomingly. Lady Montague, you are good enough to call me your friend. Will you trust me entirely?"

"Yes, Doctor, I will. You love my boy."

"I have a great regard for Sir Henry, and I would not mislead you for the world. Now, I want you to be patient. That is all. Yes, I know; but you can actually do nothing."

"You will not so much as tell me where my poor boy is?"

"I cannot. He is wandering from place to place. A friend of mine is his companion. I heard from this friend two or three days ago. Sir Henry experienced a shock. He took a frightful fall from Lady Montague. The danger to his mind is, I firmly believe, over now. In the mean time he could not do better than travel. I believe they are going eastward, now, into the Desert, where communication with him will be difficult. I advise that for the present Sir Henry be left to himself. He is a sensible man. When he feels fit for civilised society, he will return home. You know he was never a letter-writer."

Though much relieved, Lady Montague was only half consoled.

"To think of his confiding in Dr. Griffith, and not in me, his own mother!" she said, with flowing tears. But when use her familiar with the sting of this wound, she drew large comfort from the fact that a friend of the Doctor was with him.

III.

THE year that began so strangely for Ellen Montague was already in the early days of December. It had been a quiet year, marked with anxiety, for though the Doctor continued to impress upon them the fact that he believed all was well with the wandering son and brother, from himself they had only received one or two flying notes, couched in strangely incoherent terms. In none of these notes did he give his address.

"I shall hear if anything is wrong with you," he wrote, "as my friend carries on a brisk correspondence with our Doctor."

For the rest, it did not seem to care for the Doctor's words. What his plans were, or when he proposed to return to Hillbury, he did not seem as his.

But for the interest inspired by their strange guest, and constant occupation about her, that would have been a dreary winter for Lady Montague and her daughter.

In the household, and she had begun to mix in general society. Her son's absence and Theodora's peculiar circumstances were the excuses she made to herself for persisting in her retirement.

But on one of those December days Dr. Griffith called, and reproached her for the isolation in which she lived. "I have seen your brother, Lord Montague," he said. "I have seen you ought to show yourself a little. Miss Ellen is nearly twenty years of age."

"I will send Ellen to her aunt's in the season," said Lady Montague. "Harry will have returned by that time."

"And Theodora? Have you formed any plans about her? She cannot remain as she is."

"Oh! Dr. Griffith, why do you force me to admit that change must come? Can we not go on as we are doing for a little longer?"

"Well!" replied the Doctor indulgently, "there is no need for any immediate change—only, one ought to be prepared for all contingencies, and, as it will be sooner or later, I wanted to break my ground."

"Doctor, what do you mean?"

"Will you do me a very great honour, Lady Montague?"

"Will I do anything for you that lies in my power?"

"That's kindly spoken. You know that I am going into my new house almost at once. Now I want to give a house-warming—to ask everybody—all the neighbourhood. I am blessed with neither wife nor sister. Will you do the honours for me on the occasion?"

The request was rather a startling one; but Lady Montague did not see her way to refusing it. Dr. Griffith had been the best of friends to her, and she felt for his solitary condition.

"By the bye," she said, when she had consented to preside, "what is your evening?"

"That's kindly spoken. We must be home for Christmas, on which day, of course, we expect you as usual."

"I shall be away from home during Christmas week," the Doctor said, "returning before the New Year. My evening will be the 31st of December. The young ladies will come, of course?"

"You think it will be wise for Theodora?"

"I am sure of it."

"And you are her doctor, so I can make no objection."

Helped by sundry young ladies of his acquaintance, the Doctor now sent out a host of invitations. He had called on his fair new acquaintances in confidence, the "White Lady of Hillbury" was to be one of his guests, and each fair confidante whispered the secret to two or two intimate friends. There was not one of the invited who did not make a point of being disgraced for the 31st of December.

He paid frequent visits to Hillbury—unpermitted in the morning. On one of these occasions he said to Ellen and Theodora, who were busy in the conservatory, "I begin to be frightened. There are so many people coming on the 31st. How am I to amuse them?"

"They will dance, won't they?" said Ellen.

"But all can't dance at once, and I have a fair number of non-dancers."

"Have we talent enough amongst us to get up theatricals?" Ellen suggested.

"Talent possibly, not time."

Here Ellen's eyes fell upon Theodora, who, paying no attention to their talk, was standing, her watering-pot in one hand, the other gathering her white ruffles from under her feet, looking out with dreamy eyes on the wintry landscape. It was a *pose* that Bernard might have envied.

"I have it," said Ellen, striking her hands together; "*poes* *theatricals!* Theodora shall be—let me see—Iphigenia before the Grecian host—oh, oh, oh! Oh, oh! She would be splendid!" And looking at her friend, the girl intoned Swinburne's fine lines:

For now lady comes to the altar, where as priest
Death monument could meet her—the maiden stood.
With light in all her face as of a bride
Drooping, or shining of daffodil light
Far flung from towers of a bridge

Don't you know, Doctor! With her Greek dress and her jewelled girdle, and her hair about her, 'brighter than a bridal veil'."

The Doctor did not at once answer his young friend's rhapsody. His eyes, in which there was a gleam, as of a triumph, were fixed on Theodora. "Yes," he said, slowly, after a few moments' pause. "I think that would do. It would be a great appearance to our little public, but there must be other points. Will you try and get up the thing for me, Miss Ellen?"

"Certainly," she answered, "if Mamma does not mind."

The Doctor went away satisfied. On that day he was starting for his Christmas journey.

The Christmas of December came round in due course. The Doctor had not yet returned to his house, and no one had heard of him. Then came a letter for Lady Montague which made her eyes dance with pleasure; but she told no one of its contents. That singular man, the Doctor, had begged her to keep her own counsel.

Every one at Hillbury was busy meanwhile in costume-making, consulting, rehearsing. A few of the best-looking young people in the neighbourhood had been gathered together, and poems, plays, and celebrated works of fiction had been consulted for striking situations. With some difficulty Ellen had succeeded in making Theodora understand what was required of her; but this difficulty was the only one she had to encounter, so far as her guest was concerned. So soon as Theodora discovered that she was desired to dress in a particular way, and throw herself into a particular position, she proved so graceful, clever, and supple, that Ellen was convinced she had in some period of her former life practised the mimicry of a few of the best-looking young people in the sacrifice in Swinburne's "Erechtheus." Ellen arranged that Theodora should be the last representation, and no one was to see her until the moment when, according to the Doctor's programme, she was to burst in all her beauty and grace upon the little world.

This last day of the month of the old year found Dr. Griffith in London. He was seated in a private sitting-room of one of the large hotels with a single companion—a young and very handsome man, dark-eyed, fine-featured, his face bronzed with exposure to wind and weather. The two were alone in the room. The Doctor appeared to be exhausted. He looked hot and anxious.

"You will not play me false at the last moment," he said; "say this is a whim of mine."

"People have no business to have whims," the young man replied feebly. "Pardon me, Doctor. You have been a good friend to me. I ought to be more patient. But the idea of returning home—settling down—looking life in the face—is horrible."

"I do not ask you to settle down," was the calm rejoinder. "I ask you to see your mother, to do your old friends honour; after that, go away again as soon as you like."

The young man made no reply. "I vowed I would never return to the world again. I am not fit for society. I am a fool—a brute—a man who does not recognise perfection when he meets it."

Then, breaking off suddenly, "Doctor," he cried out, "do you think I shall ever be able to forgive myself?"

"I think you are a coward, my dear boy; frightfully morbid."

There came a very boyish expression into the face of the young man. "Perhaps you will not believe it," he said; "but it is true. When she told me her profession the thought of my mother made me hesitate. She has the old-fashioned ideas, you know. She thinks actors and actresses are necessarily wicked."

"I thought as much," said the Doctor; "and this is partly what has kept you from home all these months. You were unjust to your mother, Sir Henry. If she had known the lady as you did—"

"An afraid she would not have the chance, and now it is too late."

"You ought to think of the living," said the Doctor. "You have been unjust to your mother—you owe her reparation. I should tell you that I have written to her. She has consented to preside to-morrow."

"Then that settles it," said the young man, with the air of one who rejoices in being freed from the burden of deciding.

The two left London on the following morning, and reached Dr. Griffith's house about an hour before his guests were to assemble.

The party from Hillbury were there already. The Doctor shut up Sir Henry in the library, and went to the drawing-room.

Lady Montague was there alone. The young ladies were in an inner room preparing for the party they were to take later.

The Doctor led Lady Montague to the door of his study. "One moment," he said, pausing on the threshold; "as a favour to me do not let Miss Ellen know her brother is here until the theatricals are over. It might excite her, you know."

"Yes, yes," said the mother, irresolutely. In another moment she was alone with her son. No sooner had the young man seen his mother's face than he was ashamed of his own injustice, while as for her, in less than a moment, his long silence, his apparent indifference, the mystery of his incoherent letters, was forgotten. It was enough for her that she saw her darling—that he was strong, well, and beautiful as ever, and that he had not forgotten to love her.

They spent an hour together, then the Doctor, looking radiant and excited, much like a benevolent wizard, Lady Montague thought, peeped in. "Our friends are arriving," he said. "I am afraid Sir Henry must dress."

Lady Montague went to the large drawing-room to receive the Doctor's guests.

Presently the room filled. Then Sir Henry, in his evening dress, with his bronzed face and the fine aristocratic manners that everybody knew, appeared from the clouds, as it were, creating the greatest excitement amongst the mother's friends.

He noticed that a large heavy crimson curtain was drawn across one end of the room. "I suppose there is to be dancing presently," he said to a lady standing near him.

"Yes," she answered; "after the theatricals."

"After—pardon me—after the theatricals—something of the kind. Miss Montague takes a principal part. I believe they are to begin at eleven."

Sir Henry Montague bit his lip. His neighbour gathered that he did not approve of his sister's acting, and hurried off to report this fact to one of her intimate friends.

Sighing deeply, the young baronet took a seat in a remote corner of the room. The Doctor went up to him. "I am afraid all this recalls the past to you," he said.

Sir Henry, being sensitive, thought he might have been spared that remark at least.

"Stay where you are," went on his old friend, indignantly. "I will see that no one disturbs you."

The curtain was drawn up, and for about an hour scene succeeded scene upon the little stage which had been erected for the purpose. They were all prettily conceived, and correctly carried out. Most of them were greeted with immense applause. Sir Henry did not applaud. Those who could command a sight of his face said he had grown ill-tempered. When he did not frown he yawned.

After about six scenes had followed one another the curtain was drawn down, and those who had taken part in them entered the drawing-room, where people were crushing upon one another to get a better view of the stage.

"Is anything going to happen?" asked Sir Harry of a young lady whom he knew.

"The young lady looked at him. 'Surely you know?' she said. 'On the contrary,' he replied, 'I am in complete ignorance.' 'Hush! hush!' she said, excitedly. 'The curtain is moving.'"

Languiqually Sir Harry turned his face. It might be amusing to see what it was that so excited this little provincial world.

Dr. Griffith was by his side now, grasping his arm with a nervous pressure which perplexed and annoyed him.

Slowly the curtain rose, amid a great silence, followed presently by a hum, and expressions of delight—"Marvelous!" "Beautiful!" "Strange!" "But what does it mean?" Who knows?"

Sir Harry had sprung to his feet unconscious of the crowd, unconscious of the tightened grasp upon his arm, and the anxious eyes of the first sight that had seized and swayed him. There stood Theodora, clad in her Grecian robe of pure white, her lovely throat bare, her eyes uplifted, "with light in all her face as of a bride, smiling," and her sweet lips "trembling with pride in pleasure." It was such an image as a man might die for, and die blessing Heaven for the solemn gift of life.

There were other figures. An altar, with fire burning upon it; a priest; a man dressed as Chorus, with snowy beard, and flowing robes. In many two—the Doctor and his friend—were only he.

"When the curtain fell, Sir Harry found himself in the library, with the Doctor looking at him anxiously.

The young man wiped his brow, on which drops of cold sweat were standing.

"What I am mad," he said, in a low voice.

"As surely as I see you, so surely I saw her, or her wraith."

"Whom did you see?"

"I saw Mabel as she was in that famous scene. She must be ill or dying. It could not be two such beautiful women. Doctor, you are smiling. You despise me, of course. Oh, God! I shall go mad."

He dropped into a chair and covered his face from the light. There was a screen in the Doctor's study, from behind which there came sounds of movement. The Doctor held up his hand warningly. Then he laid his hand upon the young man's shoulder.

"Sir Henry," he said, "be a man."

His hand was shaken off impatiently.

The Doctor continued to smile. "Let us suppose," he said, "that what you saw was a reality. What would you do?"

"Can you ask me?"

"That would be no more hesitation? You would acknowledge her before the world?"

Here the bowed head was raised, and eager eyes, set in the midst of a face haggard with pain, were turned on the Doctor, who, as he spoke, his young friend's voiceless, spoke again. He spoke clearly, emphasising his words, as if he wished them to reach further than the one pair of ears to which they were addressed. "Let us suppose for a moment that it is not as you think. Let us suppose that there was one person that night who had his wife about him, that the *prima* friend, the person who saved her pretended she was dead, and carried her away from a life which, even without this accident, would have been too much for her brain. Let us suppose, further, that this woman, by working unjustly of an admirable friend, procured his patient a home, where she would be tenderly and lovingly treated; a home, too, where, as this subtle friend was aware, she would soon become dear to her own sake."

But here the good Doctor broke off. Sir Henry had realised the whole plot, and with a fervency which went up to his head, he was wringing Dr. Griffith's hand.

"Where is she?" he said.

The Doctor made another sign with his hand, and from behind the screen came Theodora, led forward by Ellen and Lady Montague. She looked bewildered. "Try you and make her understand," said Lady Montague, gently, and left them together.

It is necessary to say that Sir Henry succeeded?

When the New Year was about two hours old, and Dr. Griffith's guests were dancing merrily, the young baronet, as he had arranged them, glided no longer, but radiantly, into the room, in dress of black, in the world on his arm. The little electric that had served for a stage was converted now into a platform, where the non-dancers could gain a good view of the room. Lady Montague was sitting there, looking pale and happy, in the dress of black, and in the world on his arm. Sir Henry went up to her. She rose, blushing like a girl. "Mother," he said aloud, "allow me to present you to the lady who, if God will, is to be my wife some day. Her name is Mabel Hetherington, and for a few months she was known as a famous singer."

Meanwhile the music was silent, the dancing had ceased. Lady Montague was the centre of a little crowd. She answered, "My son, I congratulate you." Then she held out her hand to the girl she had known and loved as Theodora. "Mabel will make one of the best of wives," she said softly.

That was the prettiest flattery Lady Montague had ever received.

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"If we consult her," he said, "she will be flattered, and will feel bound to do her best for us; if we seek aid in other quarters, she will be vexed, and she will throw a curse upon us."

And the Queen, like a good wife, submitted.



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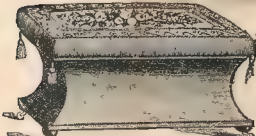
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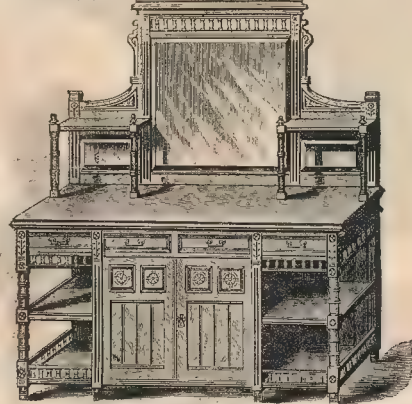
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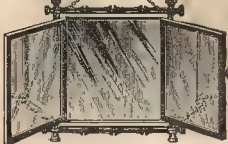
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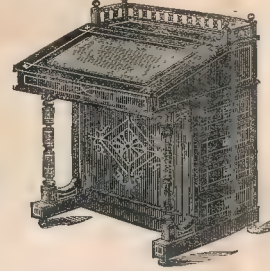
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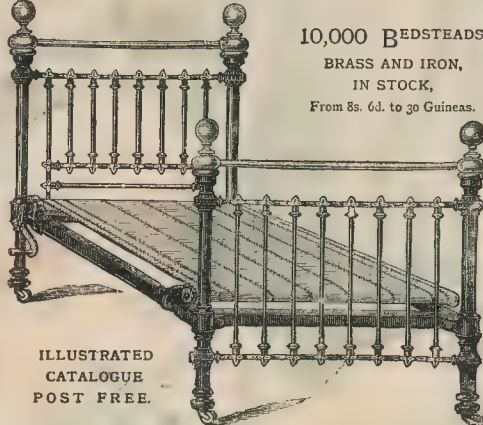
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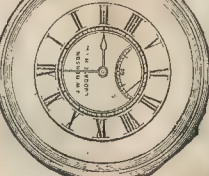
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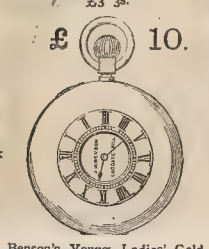
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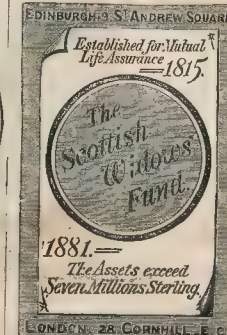
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